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# Robert Hall

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E. PAXTON HOOD

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ROBERT HALL..



# ROBERT HALL.

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*Author of "The World of Anecdote," "The Day, the Book, and  
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New York:

A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON,

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## CHAPTER I.

### *BIRTH—CHILDHOOD—EARLY STUDIES.*

THE readers of Lord Lytton's instructive fiction, "The Caxtons," cannot fail to remember Mr. Caxton's discourse on the "Hygienic Chemistry of Books," in which he winds up his discourse by administering what he calls his medicine, for the mental distresses and sad life-sorrows of his brother and his son. "'Biography,' he said, 'is the medicine here! Roland, you said you would try my prescription—here it is,'—and my father took up a book, and reached it to the Captain.

"My uncle looked over it—*Life of the Reverend Robert Hall*. 'Brother, he was a Dissenter, and, thank Heaven! I am a church-and-state man, to the backbone!'

"'Robert Hall was a brave man, and a true soldier under the Great Commander,' said my father, artfully.

"The Captain mechanically carried his forefinger to his forehead in military fashion, and saluted the book respectfully.

"'I have another copy for you, Pisistratus,' addressing his son,—'that is mine which I have lent Roland. This, which I bought for you to-day, you will keep.'

“‘Thank you, sir,’ said I, listlessly, not seeing what great good the *Life of Robert Hall* could do me, or why the same medicine should suit the old weather-beaten uncle and the nephew yet in his teens.

“‘I have said nothing,’ resumed my father, slightly bowing his broad temples, ‘of the Book of Books, for that is the *lignum vitæ*, the cardinal medicine for all.’

“After breakfast the next morning, I took my hat to go out, when my father, looking at me, and seeing by my countenance that I had not slept, said gently—

“‘My dear Pisistratus, you have not tried my medicine yet.’

“‘What medicine, sir?’

“‘Robert Hall.’

“‘No, indeed, not yet,’ said I, smiling.

“‘Do so, my son, before you go out; depend on it you will enjoy your walk more.’

“I confess that it was with some reluctance I obeyed. I went back to my own room, and sate resolutely down to my task. Are there any of you, my readers, who have not read the *Life of Robert Hall*? If so, in the words of the great Captain Cuttle, ‘When found, make a note of it.’ Never mind what your theological opinion is—Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Pædobaptist, Independent, Quaker, Unitarian, Philosopher, Free-thinker,—send for Robert Hall! Whatever, then, thou art, orthodox or heterodox, send for the *Life of Robert Hall*. It is the life of a man that does good to manhood itself to contemplate.

“I had finished the biography, which is not long,

and was musing over it, when I heard the Captain's cork-leg upon the stairs. I opened the door for him, and he entered, book in hand, as I, also book in hand, stood ready to receive him.

“‘Well, sir,’ said Roland, seating himself, ‘has the prescription done you any good?’

“‘Yes, uncle—great.’

“‘And me too. By Jupiter, Sisty, that same Hall was a fine fellow! I wonder if the medicine has gone through the same channels in both? Tell me, first, how it has affected you.’

“‘*Imprimis*, then, my dear uncle, I fancy that a book like this must do good to all who live in the world in the ordinary manner, by admitting us into a circle of life of which I suspect we think but little. Here is a man connecting himself directly with a heavenly purpose, and cultivating considerable faculties to that one end; seeking to accomplish his soul as far as he can, that he may do most good on earth, and take a higher existence up to heaven; a man intent upon a sublime and spiritual duty: in short, living as it were in it, and so filled with the consciousness of immortality, and so strong in the link between God and man, that, without any affected stoicism, without being insensible to pain—rather, perhaps, from a nervous temperament, acutely feeling it—he yet has a happiness wholly independent of it. It is impossible not to be thrilled with an admiration that elevates while it awes you, in reading that solemn “Dedication of himself to God.” This offering of “soul and body, time, health, reputation talents,” to

the divine and invisible Principle of Good, calls us suddenly to contemplate the selfishness of our own view and hopes, and awakens us from the egotism that exacts all and resigns nothing.

“‘But this book has mostly struck upon the chord in my own heart, in that characteristic which my father indicated as belonging to all biography. Here is a life of remarkable *fulness*, great study, great thought, and great action; and yet,’ said I, colouring, ‘how small a place those feelings, which have tyrannised over me, and made all else seem blank and void, hold in that life. It is not as if the man were a cold and hard ascetic; it is easy to see in him not only remarkable tenderness and warm affections, but strong self-will, and the passion of all vigorous natures. Yes; I understand better now what existence in a true man should be.’

“‘All that is very well said,’ quoth the Captain, ‘but it did not strike me. What I have seen in this book is courage. Here is a poor creature rolling on the carpet with agony; from childhood to death tortured by a mysterious incurable malady—a malady that is described as “an internal apparatus of torture;” and who does by his heroism more than *bear* it—he puts it out of power to affect him; and though (here is the passage) “his appointment by day and by night was incessant pain, yet high enjoyment was, notwithstanding, the law of his existence.” Robert Hall reads me a lesson—me, an old soldier, who thought myself above taking lessons—in courage, at least. And, as I came to that passage when, in the sharp paroxysms before death, he says,

“I have not complained, have I, sir?—and I won’t complain!”—when I came to that passage I started up, and cried, “Roland de Caxton, thou hast been a coward! and, an thou hadst had thy deserts, thou hadst been cashiered, broken, and drummed out of the regiment long ago!”

“‘After all, then, my father was not so wrong—he placed his guns right, and fired a good shot.’

“‘He must have been from 6° to 9° above the crest of the parapet,’ said my uncle, thoughtfully—‘which, I take it, is the best elevation, both for shot and shells, in enfilading a work.’”

The extract is lengthy, but it is singularly noteworthy, not only as expressing the opinion of so keen an observer of human nature, and so extensive a reader as Lord Lytton, but for the circumstance that it should be found giving point and purpose to an interesting epoch in his story, in which Robert Hall is called to minister to the griefs of life. It furnishes a good introduction to the present pages, and shows that, in the estimation of Lytton, Robert Hall was indeed *A Man Worth Remembering*.

The paragraph in the *Life of Hall* which excited the enthusiastic admiration of the old Captain is in the closing scene of his life; a martyr then, as he had been a martyr through all his days, to the severest and sharpest agonies.

“On recovering from one of his severe paroxysms, he adverted to the affectionate attentions of his beloved wife and daughters, as well as his numerous comforts,

and exclaimed—‘What a mercy it is to have so many alleviations! I might have been deprived of all these comforts;—I might have been in poverty;—I might have been the most abject wretch on the face of the earth.’

“During one night, in which the attacks were a little mitigated in number and severity, he frequently expressed the most lively gratitude to God, as well as his simple, unshaken reliance on his Saviour; and repeated nearly the whole of Robinson’s beautiful hymn:—

“‘Come, Thou Fount of every blessing!  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy never ceasing,  
Call for songs of endless praise!’ etc.

“The same night, under one of his paroxysms, he said to the friend who was with him, ‘Why should “a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” *I have not complained, have I, sir?—and I won’t complain.*’”

We have already seen, in the conversation between the two Caxtons, that the Life of Hall presents two very distinct aspects. The *Quarterly Review*, in a very lengthy estimate of his character and career, immediately after his death,—a period in the history of the *Review* when it was not remarkable for a large liberality of sentiment towards Dissenters of any denomination,—speaks of him as a “man of talents so dignified as to be surpassed by very few men in his time”;—as “an absolute master of English, more massive



than Addison, more easy and unconstrained than Johnson, more sober than Burke, never wearisome nor oppressive, simply because with him it is all instinct with strong sense,—there is the bolt as well as the thunder”;— and “as exciting the reverence we naturally feel for one who, so gifted, was content, for conscience’ sake, to occupy a far lower station in society than seemed his due.” This is one side of his character;—this is the side which arrested the admiration of Pisistratus Caxton; the other aspect of Hall’s character presents him to us as a saintly martyr,—his whole life was doomed to incessant pain, his sufferings no doubt shocked and shook his nervous system to the centre. This was the aspect of his character which commanded the enthusiasm of the old Captain, his heroism in “enduring hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” It is probable that but for this he would have affixed his name to some work which would have borne upon it the seal of literary immortality, or would have been urged forward in some pathway where his eminent genius might have lifted him beyond the social scale or status to which his religious opinions confined him. As it is, on the one hand, we are compelled to admiration for a man remarkable for the fulness of his attainments and the affluence of his powers; his wit was brilliant, his classical scholarship so comprehensive and complete that he was one of the especial intimates of that huge scholar, Dr. Parr, who left him a mourning ring in token of his affection, and said of him, in his notes to his great Spital sermon, “Mr. Hall, like Bishop Jeremy

Taylor, has the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint." There are competent critics who regard him as the only English orator whose name may be mentioned with those of Demosthenes and Cicero; he has been said to wield the thunder of the one, and to have shed forth the flame of the other. His genius was exercised, his powers exerted, on no such great arenas as those in which the imperial masters of Grecian and Latin eloquence displayed their splendours: humble Dissenting chapels, of the order of those buildings nearly a hundred years since, furnished the platform for those prodigious excursions of noblest eloquence; and they were all chastened, calmed, and toned down by that other characteristic of Hall which makes him eminently worthy of observation, the saintly and conscientious consecration of all his gifts and talents to the work of the Christian ministry. In the pulpit all his powers were under control, all reined in, and while pouring along at their swiftest and most commanding speed, he never permitted either to be diverted from the most legitimate and most harmonious proportion in the course along which they were speeding. He was a Christian of no ordinary type; his character was under the control of a singular combination of *graces*; his sufferings never, from all that we know, led him to "charge God foolishly"; if, by the force of his strong will and exquisitely correct taste, he kept all his powers under a high restraint in the pulpit; in his private life, likewise

an exceedingly devout and most humble faith, while it restrained him from murmuring, constrained him constantly to a life of hoping and believing. In his lowly sphere of duties Robert Hall seems to us to realize very much of the character given by the apostle, "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; cast down, but not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

Robert Hall was born at Arnsby, a little obscure village about eight miles from Leicester, on the 2nd of May, 1764. Arnsby, little known then, has probably not emerged from obscurity since ; it lies, we believe, upon no line of rail ; its repose does not appear to have been disturbed by the scream of the railway engine,—and perhaps the circumstance which has made it most famous, is that it gave birth to this illustrious English child. His father, also Robert Hall, was pastor of the little Baptist congregation there, but not originally of that neighbourhood ; he came from a respectable stock of yeomen in the neighbourhood of Newcastle-on-Tyne. He left Northumberland early in life, and for nearly forty years ministered in the little Leicestershire village. A good man, a true minister of Christ, he pursued his humble way honoured and highly respected, and attained to some estimation in his own time by the publication of a volume much read in its day, and which many read with pleasure still,—a book known as "Hall's Help to

Zion's Travellers." His distinguished son sketched his character, and the sketch was published anonymously at the end of Dr. Ryland's funeral sermon in 1791. He also must have possessed many of the attributes which made his son famous; for we read that "he appeared to the greatest advantage upon subjects where the faculties of most men failed them; for the natural element of his mind was greatness. At times he seemed to labour with conceptions too big for his utterance; and, if an obscurity ever pervaded his discourses, it must be traced to this source,—the disproportion of his language to the vastness of his conceptions." The sketch continues: "He had great force without ornament, and grandeur without correctness." Robert was, like Philip Doddridge, the youngest child of a large family. He was the fourteenth, and, like Philip, his infancy was remarkably feeble. At one time, after lying long in his mother's lap, life seemed extinct, and she said, "He is gone!" Of course, in those days, as childhood strengthened, if education were to be attempted, it must be at a dame's school in the village; and so upon Mrs. Lyley was conferred the immortal honour of being the first teacher of the future orator. But extraordinary instincts were struggling in the child. Even then he is said to have been a wonderful talker. We can well believe it, and that an especially teasing inquisitiveness was frequently on his tongue. In talk his constitutional ardour manifested itself. Dr. Gregory says of him: "He was perpetually asking questions. One day, when he was about three years old, on his expressing disapprobation of

some person who spoke quickly, his mother reminded him that he spoke very fast. 'No,' said he; 'I only keep at it!'" Even in years which may be spoken of almost as those of infancy, he was a great reader. He carried the books away to the old churchyard, and sat upon the old graves there, pondering their contents. The infant child appears to have been a dreamer and a thinker too; and to the same suggestive study would, as often as possible, retire from the din of the somewhat crowded household, and sit there, solitary, beneath the shades of night until the nurse compelled him to return. Such were the singular hours spent by the extraordinary child in summer evenings among the graves with his books round him. At six years of age he was placed as a day scholar under the charge of a Mr. Simmons, of Wigston, a village about four miles from Arnsby, to which school he walked in the morning, returning home in the evening. But the poor little fellow's martyrdom began; the pain in his back became so severe that he was often obliged to lie down upon the road. Then his schoolfellows took it in turn to carry him. When his father discovered his sufferings and inability to walk, arrangements were made for him to stay at Wigston during the week, coming home on the Saturday and returning on the Monday. He took back with him books to read, and they show the singular precocity of his genius. The works of Jonathan Edwards were among his favourites. "It is an ascertained fact," says Dr. Gregory, "that before he was nine years of age, he had read and re-read all the greatest treatises of that

profound and extraordinary thinker." The essay "On the Freedom of the Will," and "On the Affections," and Butler's "Analogy," were all read with avidity, and the course of the argument comprehended. Hall used to ascribe his predilection for this class of studies to his intimate association in childhood with a tailor, a member of his father's congregation, a shrewd, well-read man, and an acute metaphysician. And a very singular picture it seems: the old tailor sitting on his board, with the little, earnest, child-face by his side, hearing and asking questions. At last, after remaining with Mr. Simmons four years,—that is, until he was nearly eleven years of age,—the conscientious master begged the father to remove the boy. He declared that he was quite unable to keep pace with his pupil; that he was often obliged to sit up all night to prepare the lessons for the morning; he could no longer continue the practice, and felt therefore that he must relinquish his favourite scholar.

Such are the glimpses furnished to us of his very earliest childhood and youth. Removed from Mr. Simmons, he was placed beneath a probably sterner and more competent tutor, the Rev. John Ryland, who conducted a school of a higher class in Northampton. Ryland is said to have been one of the brightest ornaments of the last century, a comparatively obscure but able man, scholarly, but to the last degree eccentric. Robert received a kind of fright upon his first introduction. Mr. Ryland was entertaining a party of gentlemen on the evening of the lad's arrival, and he was

permitted to spend the evening in the parlour. Mr. Ryland was an advanced Liberal for those times, and the conversation turned upon the policy of the war we were then commencing with our American colonies. Ryland poured forth an impassioned harangue which while it frightened the lad, probably inspired that passion for freedom which through all his life after stirred him so ardently. "Were I the American commanding officer," said Ryland, "I would call together all my comrades and brother officers; I would order every man to bare his arm that a portion of blood might be extracted and mixed in one basin on the table. I would then command every one to draw his sword, and dip the point of it in the basin, and swear by the Great Eternal never to sheathe the consecrated blade till he had achieved the freedom of his country. And if after this any one should turn coward or traitor, I should feel it a duty, a pleasure, a luxury, to plunge my weapon in that man's heart!" This must have sounded rather dreadful on the first introduction to a schoolmaster. But we need not believe John Ryland to have been a very fearful character, notwithstanding these terrific words. Robert was only here about eighteen months; but he obtained the first lessons in a higher and more systematic culture. Mr. Ryland gave subjects for exercises in English composition, and he thought so highly of some of the papers of Robert that they were inserted in the periodicals of that day before their young author had reached his eleventh year. At Northampton, too, he appears to have heard the first eloquence which impressed and

charmed him by its style and sentiment. And he was pursuing his way, making rapid progress in classical and mathematical learning, when pain, perpetually recurring, prostrated him, and he was obliged to return home, although under thirteen years of age.

It was now probably with his father, while walking through the surrounding lanes and fields of the village, that his mind and heart settled down into a more confirmed seriousness of faith and sentiment. The instances we have given show that he was always a serious and even devout child. His old nurse, Nancy, used to say, in homely style: "I will answer for it that my dear Bobby knew the Lord before he was seven years of age." Yet, judging from his after character, we should say it was impossible but that in those earlier years he should sometimes break forth in freaks of humour, whilst rural scenery would naturally invite to many pastimes, some of which are on record. In spite of his frequent pain and prostration, it is said that in all the sports and games of his brothers and companions he took the lead; and one day, observing a farmer's servant carrying a bag containing a sucking pig as a present to his father, while the servant went in with the message Robert contrived to abstract the roaster and tie up a dog in the bag in its place. The unsuspecting countryman carried in the intended present "with his master's respects," and on opening the bag was scarcely less frightened than amazed to find the extraordinary transformation, the mischievous urchin standing by all the time and enjoying the



comedy. One rather likes to find that the serious boy was not insensible to the freaks and jokes of juvenile humour.

But, as a remarkable circumstance in the life, we find the following entry in the Church book at Arnsby :  
“On Lord’s-day, August 23rd, 1778, Robert Hall, youngest son of our pastor, Robert Hall, gave a very distinct account of his being the subject of spiritual grace. He was only fourteen years of age last May, and has appeared to be serious from his earliest childhood. He was baptized on Lord’s-day, September 6th, and the same day was added to the Church.”

## CHAPTER II.

### *STUDENT LIFE.*

B RISTOL, where, in 1831, he was to close his public career, was also the city where he received his first more immediate preparation for the work of the ministry. He was but fifteen years of age when he entered the Bristol Baptist Academy, which had then only been founded eight years. It was his father's earnest desire that he should enter on the ministerial office; but it may be supposed that this was not so easy and simple a step then as now. The youth had to pass through some examinations respecting his inclination, and motives, and the end he had in view in reference to the ministry, and to make some declaration of his religious sentiments. All this was done to the satisfaction of the Church. Then the Church set him apart with solemn prayer; and after this his father delivered a solemn discourse to this lad of fifteen from the text, "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." This was his permission to preach, and to prosecute the work of the ministry, as Providence might indicate. As to his first attempts at preaching, they were unfortunate,—in

a sense they were failures ; he was appointed to deliver an address in the Broadmead Meeting-house, Bristol, where also, as pastor, so many years after he preached his last sermon. He took for his text, "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." After proceeding for some time with much facility, and to the delight of his audience, he suddenly stopped, covered his face with both his hands, and exclaimed, "Oh, I have lost all my ideas !" He sat down, his hands still covering his face. His failure, however, by no means diminished the persuasion which his tutors and his hearers entertained of the promise which he gave of future power, could he but acquire self-possession ; so he was appointed to speak again on the same subject in the same place on the ensuing week. And a second time he failed, and the failure seems to have been still more grievous to witness, and still more painful to bear ; he hurried into the vestry exclaiming, "If this does not humble me, the devil must have me !" And yet, only a few months after this, upon the occasion of his first vacation at home in Arnsby, he accompanied his father to some special religious services to Clipstone, in Northamptonshire. His father was to preach in the former part of the day, and, in the evening, the celebrated Benjamin Beddome, the author of some of our most beautiful hymns, and an eminent and impressive preacher, was to conduct the service. Mr. Beddome was so impressed by the conversation of young Hall, that he insisted upon it

that he should relinquish the evening service to the youth,—then between sixteen and seventeen. The congregation was largely composed of ministers; there was great difficulty in overcoming what we may well believe to have been his terrified reluctance, but he took the service, and preached from that great text, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;” and mysterious and awful as the subject was, it is said that the metaphysical acumen, and impressive application to the conscience, produced a profound impression. We can but glance at those times faintly, but firmly, indicating the steps he was taking.

And now, after three years at Bristol, in 1781 we follow him to his studies in Aberdeen. Scotland was the only place then open for a Dissenter to pursue a course of University education, unless we except Trinity College, Dublin. Mr. Hall proceeded on what is called Dr. Ward’s foundation; a presentation he was so fortunate as to obtain. At this time the reputation of the two Colleges of Aberdeen,—King’s and Marischal,—were about equally balanced; eminent men presided over both Halls in the renowned old granite city. The young man’s letters to Dr. Ryland, while noting his attainments in study, deplore the want of religious advantages in the seat of learning, and the profanity and profligacy of many of the students, one of whom, he assures his friend, affirmed to him that he knew no use for the word God, unless it were to give point to an oath. He appears, however, to have found, as such students will find, some congenial religious society,

and among others we are interested in noticing his acquaintance in the new town with the aged sister of Alexander Cruden, the compiler of the Concor-  
dance.

We obtain an interesting little insight into the student life of Robert Hall and his friend James—afterwards Sir James—Mackintosh,—from the Life of Mackintosh, in a letter from one of their fellow-students, who, at the time of writing it, had attained to a distinguished situation in the scene of their early studies :

“The Rev. W. Jack, D.D., Principal of King’s College  
Aberdeen.

“To the Hon. Lord Gillies.

“Pursuing the same course, I followed at the distance of one year. In either case (both at Aberdeen and Edinburgh) I found him (Mackintosh) the centre of all that was elegant and refined, by general acclaim, installed *inter studiosos facile princeps*. At Aberdeen he was familiarly designated ‘the poet,’ or ‘poet Mackintosh.’ I never could learn to what circumstance he was indebted for this *sobriquet*, but was told that it had followed him from school. In vain he disclaimed it, pleading ‘not guilty’ to a single couplet. I considered it meant as a hint, that, if he did not compose verses, he should—possessing in his own person all the qualifications of a gay troubadour.

“His chief associate at King’s College was my class fellow, the late Rev. Robert Hall. Like Castor and Pollux, they were assimilated in the minds of all who

knew them, by reason of the equal splendour of their talents ; although in other respects they were very unlike. General courtesy, tasteful manners, a playful fancy, and an easy flow of elocution, pointed out James Mackintosh among his companions. Plainness, sincerity, an ardent piety, and undeviating love of truth, were the characteristics of Robert Hall ; in both so strongly marked, that I do not believe they ever changed, or could change under any circumstances.

“ Under their auspices a society was formed in King’s College, jocularly designated ‘The Hall and Mackintosh Club.’ They were, in fact, the centre of attraction, if not the source of light, round which eight or nine of us moved, partaking of the general influence. Of this group of once ardent spirits, I am now the sole survivor ; and of all of them I can say, that to a man they lived and died zealous supporters of what are called Liberal principles. My recollection of the topics which then occupied us has become imperfect. It was an object with all of us to rouse into action the energies of Robert Hall, whose great guns were sure to tell. This could only be done by convincing him of the moral tendency of the argument ;—then there were none more animated than he ; whereas he detested sophistry, and the more ingenious the sophisms, the greater his despite. Mackintosh would assail him with small artillery, of which he well knew the graceful and becoming use ; and, having for a season maintained the contest, would himself lead the way to an unanimous adoption of principles which could not be controverted.

“At one time Mackintosh devoted eight days of intense study to obtain a mastery over the controversy between Dr. Priestley and Bishop Horsley, not doubting that this would lead to a warm conflict. The subject did not please, and polemics were henceforth proscribed. He was afterwards more successful in selecting subjects from the late American war—from the letters of Junius, and from the pending trial of Warren Hastings. I consider it a consequence of having participated in these collisions of opinions, that afterwards, when the *Vindicæ Gallicæ* and *Hall's Discourses* appeared, the perusal affected me, as a repetition of a former lesson, with the leading principles of which I was before familiar.”

During his continuance in this eminent and ancient Seat of Learning, he was probably without a rival or competitor for earnest assiduity and ardent and severe application to his studies. At the same time he was admired for the urbanity of his deportment, and the uniform consistency of his moral and religious conduct. It was between his third and fourth year at Aberdeen that he pronounced a Greek oration. We have heard scholars say they would like to read that oration. It was heard with immense applause, and followed by the conferring of the honour of a degree of A.M. Mr. Morris, in his “Biographical Recollections,” says: “The spot on which he stood to deliver this memoriter address is still carefully pointed out to amateurs who visit the college, and his fame long survived in the memory of some of the most distinguished members of

the University." We have seen that his most distinguished fellow-student, and then his closest and most intimate friend, was Mackintosh. They foreshadowed their future. They were a celebrated pair. When they first became acquainted, Sir James was in his eighteenth year, Mr. Hall in his nineteenth. Mackintosh said he became attached to Mr. Hall because he could not help it. In many particulars their tastes were different, as no doubt the course of their lives had hitherto been. Sir James confesses that "while he was fascinated by the brilliancy and acumen of Hall, and in love with his cordiality and ardour, he was awe-struck by the transparency of his conduct and the purity of his principles." They read together, they attempted to sit together always in class, to take notes together; they read Xenophon and Herodotus together, and yet more of Plato together; and when the two were seen together hurrying off to the spacious sands of the sea-shore, or to the picturesque scenery on the banks of the Don, their fellow-students, as they saw them on their way, were wont to say, "There go Plato and Herodotus!" Mackintosh used to say, in after-years, that from those days and from their discussions, he learned more, and especially as to principles, than from any books he ever read; and many long years afterwards he wrote to his early comrade that, on the most impartial survey of his early life, he could see nothing which so much tended to excite and invigorate the understanding, and to direct it towards high and, perhaps, scarcely accessible objects, as his early intimacy with his honoured friend. On the



other hand, Robert Hall spoke in the same high tone and strain of Mackintosh. "His memory," he said, "retains everything; his mind is a spacious repository hung round with beautiful images, and when he wants one he has nothing to do but reach up his hand to a peg and take it down. I am persuaded that if Sir James Mackintosh had enjoyed leisure, and had exerted himself, he would have completely outdone Jeffrey and Stewart, and all the metaphysical writers of our times." It is an interesting picture this of those two youths whose careers in life were to be so different, and both to be, in fact, illustrious. Mackintosh was, perhaps, a disappointed man, or rather, perhaps, his friends were disappointed for him. They felt that he did not receive the acknowledgment which the unquestioned eminence of his forensic and legal abilities deserved; but upon how distinguished a platform he moved compared with that of his early friend! Sir James, as a distinguished writer and apologist for freedom, soon became one of the petted coterie who had the right to move through the brilliant saloons and assemblages of Holland House. Hall's intimate friends were mostly of the humbler trading class, and the cottages and homes of the poor were the houses where he received his warmest receptions. Mackintosh, an orator, and one of unquestioned majesty and brilliancy, was known in the eminent Law Courts of his country, and lifted up his voice strenuously when it seemed that the cause of freedom was in danger. Hall's voice was never heard in public beyond the precincts of some of the humblest tabernacles of his

denomination, although from thence his mighty oration, "Modern Infidelity," and "Thoughts on the Present Crisis," rang over the land like Mackintosh's Vindication of Peltier; and indeed he was indebted to Mackintosh for introducing these fine pieces to the notice of some of the mightiest statesmen of the day. Hall trod his humble round, a much afflicted and always suffering man, amidst humble villages and small provincial towns. Mackintosh passed out, after living some time in the eye of the great world of fashion and law, to cross the seas to give laws to India, and sit as chief justice there. Mackintosh lived always on terms of the greatest intimacy with the most distinguished men of his age, from them constantly receiving mental stimulus and animation. Hall, in his lowly retreat, seldom saw a great man excepting when, occasionally, some distinguished stranger touched his neighbourhood, was drawn by the fascination of his fame to hear him, and desired a closer knowledge of the possessor of gifts so remarkable and attainments so varied; in a word, from their college at Aberdeen, their ways sharply diverged, the one passing, as compared with the immense powers he possessed, into obscurity and comparative indigence; the other stepping out into the illumination of prosperity, and title, and fame, and wealth. And yet even now, so capricious is fame, that of Sir James Mackintosh is almost a whisper, while the rumours and agitations which still hang round the name of Robert Hall are sublime and thrilling in the emotions they evoke and awaken.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *FIRST YEARS OF THE MINISTRY.*

LEAVING Aberdeen, Mr. Hall first settled as co-pastor at Broadmead Chapel, Bristol, in the year 1785; he likewise assisted as classical tutor in the academy in which he had but a short time since been a student. His association with Bristol at this period of his life was brief and unhappy; he was very young,—the reader will notice that he commenced his co-pastorate when he was only twenty-one years of age,—but his years were altogether disproportionate both to his genius and his attainments. The principal of the college, Dr. Caleb Evans, was the pastor of the Church; we may believe him to have been an amiable and excellent man, but there were probably many circumstances tending to irritate the good man's mind. It is likely that in scholarship the young tutor, fresh from the society and associations of Aberdeen, was superior to the elder; certainly the young preacher, even in those days, was peerless. Broadmead Chapel was crowded; and that compliment, which continued to be paid to Mr. Hall till the close of his course, was commenced even then; clergymen and church dignitaries of the Episcopal city were often among his auditors.

This was not all; the soundness of his theology was called in question. The framework of the theology received by many of his hearers at Broadmead was, probably, of the hard and hyper-Calvinist type; the doctrinal form of the young pastor's teaching was a modified Arminianism; the steady balance of his mind always kept him safe from the indulgence of dangerous error, or doubtful doctrine, in the pulpit; but, in private, the young metaphysician was, perhaps, not so careful. His ministry was indeed unfettered and discursive; its freshness and vigour, its redundant affluence of genius, would seem to many to leap over the pales and fences of orthodoxy; but when this was conjoined to the knowledge that the young man had strong sympathy with, and admiration for Dr. Priestley, many failed to distinguish discipleship to a man of eminent scientific acquirements, patriotic attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and distinguished private virtue, from sympathy with the Socinian preacher. Hall appears to have followed Priestley also in his idea, at this time, of the materiality of the human soul, although he never introduced the doctrine into the pulpit, and certainly renounced the opinion in after-life;—he stated his opinion to be that the nature of man is simple and uniform, that the thinking powers and faculties are the result of a certain organization of matter, and that after death he ceases to be conscious until the resurrection; at the same time he declared his conviction that this was a matter of purely metaphysical speculation, and as involving only the mode, and not the fact of future

existence ; he did not regard this as at all affecting the declarations of the Christian minister. As to the great doctrines which are the peculiar property of the Christian revelation, the proper Deity of Christ and the supreme efficacy of the Atonement, and the necessity of a Divine influence to renew and re-create the character, the young man never wavered. But even in the presentation of such doctrines as these, it is quite easy to perceive that the mind of the preacher would present them in such an aspect,—would surround them with such a new and luminous glory, both of elucidation and illustration, that he might seem to the antique order of mind a dangerous preacher, “a setter forth of strange doctrines,” and might well demand an audience more prepared in its culture to whom to convey the aspirations and hopes of his own heart and the ministrations of his own mind. It is not necessary to dwell on this period of Mr. Hall’s history ; it however belongs to his life to notice that, young as he was, while a strong party of admiring friends anxiously deprecated the idea that such an ornament to the city, and such a teacher, should be hurried from their midst, a party appears to have been forming in the Church, under an unseen and unsuspected influence, to create jealousies and to jeopardize the personal friendship of the pastor and his assistant, and to hasten his departure to another sphere of labour. Really to know him appears to have been to love him, but, then, knowledge is the great condition of affection ; there is so much involved in the idea of knowledge ; to be unknown is

to be unloved. His pupils in the college were exceedingly attached to him ; his very presence amongst them surely must have been a mighty mental and moral animation, if they were able to appreciate such a presence. And he was not one to presume upon his superiority or his position ; he was always affable and urbane, although some of them knew that he could indulge in sharp sarcasm when necessary. A singular instance of this, illustrating the manner in which he exercised his authority, was long remembered : an unhappy man had incurred the extreme penalty of the law, and was left for execution in Bristol. The circumstances of the case were such as excited very general sympathy, and some of the students were desirous of witnessing the infliction of the awful sentence. Mr. Hall expressed much surprise at so extraordinary a request, and remonstrated on its impropriety. The applicants urged that the unfortunate man had given signs of late repentance, and was expected to deliver an appropriate address ; they therefore wished to be present at his exit. The tutor replied : "Certainly, gentlemen, *that* is a most important consideration, and I therefore allow you to go, that you may learn from his example how to conduct yourselves on such an occasion."

In 1790, overtures were made to Mr. Hall from the Baptist congregation at Cambridge ; the pulpit had been occupied by a very remarkable man, Robert Robinson, a preacher whose pulpit powers, even as they are known to us by the sermons we possess, were, as they are,

beyond all praise ; but in his later ministrations he had certainly quite seceded from "the truth as it is in Jesus." The misunderstandings existing at Bristol seemed to suggest the chief subject of them as eminently suitable for that scholarly sphere. Dr. Evans, who hoped that the retirement of Mr. Hall would restore tranquillity to his own congregation, advised compliance with the invitation ; when Mr. Hall put the matter before him, with the utmost appearance of frankness, the Doctor laid his hand upon his heart and assured him that Caleb Evans was anxious that he should continue in his present field of labour, but that neither the "pastor" of Broadmead Church nor the "president" of the academy concurred in his opinions. Mr. Hall accepted the delicate distinction, and determined to act upon it ; and, in what has been truly called a calm and dignified letter, which only our limited space forbids us to insert, he signified to the Church his resignation. When the letter was read, however, not a single hand was held up in favour of the acceptance of his resignation ; all opposition was silenced, and efforts were made now to re-invite him, and to retain his services ; and all seemed to be aware, too late, that they were permitting a treasure to pass from their possession. He settled the controversy immediately by signifying that he considered himself engaged to Cambridge. Such were some of the troubles which beset the young man in the first years of his entrance into the work of the ministry.

There were worse troubles. The information is very

slight which we possess in reference to his engagement with Miss Steele at this period ; she was a near relative of the celebrated Anne Steele, whose hymns and other pieces, originally published in two volumes by Dr. Caleb Evans under the name of "Theodosia," still give to us some of the most beautiful pieces incorporated for all time, we trust, into the service of sacred song in the sanctuary. Dr. Evans attended this lady through her last illness and death. She was probably a member of the Church in Broadmead. She died in 1778, at the age of sixty-one. What was her relationship to the lady to whom Hall was engaged we do not know, probably her aunt ; thoughtless rumour has said it was "Theodosia" herself, but her age, conjoined to other circumstances, make that impossible. The lady was rich and accomplished. From the hints given by Mr. Morris we have no doubt that she was also young, capricious, and coquettish, and she was able to win her unfortunate admirer, who laid his ardour, his gracefulness, and mental attainments at her feet. We read that the same hands or tongues which had so busily employed themselves in bringing about the rupture with the Church and its pastor employed themselves also in bringing upon the young man the severest of all human disappointments. The lady afterwards married property, and affluence, and influence. But it is said that, in after-years, when the majesty and splendour of the fame of her admirer and lover shone over the empire and the world, she remembered, with feelings more than complacent, the conquest she had achieved in her younger



days. Hall's eccentricities had been set before her,—probably his personal infirmities ; and a story has been told us of her calling for her lover, at his lodgings, in her carriage, but upon finding him unprepared, or forgetful of the appointment, she drove away and saw him no more. But with Hall the separation was not so easy. How strange it is to find these intellectual giants caught in the skipping-ropes of these “airy, fairy Lilians ;” but it was even so with this great master. Somehow this unworthy girl appears to have woven her Vivian-like spells over him. Long years passed away before he was free from the enchantments of recollection ; passages in his works bear testimony to his enthrallment and his suffering. Here, perhaps, we find, as Mr. Morris finds, the root of bitterness which gives the clue to such sentences as these. When speaking of the adversities of the heart, he says : “In some they overwhelm the first hopes of life, so that they no sooner begin to taste felicity in prospect than they are crossed with hopeless disappointment.” Again in another passage : “Some are a prey to disappointed passions and blasted hopes, wasted with devouring regrets, and sick at heart with melancholy retrospects, wishing in vain that they could arrest the wings of time and put back the current of life.” And twelve years after, we, perhaps, are able to understand what memories were upon his heart when he writes : “Love may forgive all things but disappointment.” It was this memory which quickened sympathy within him when he writes : “The cry of a pierced heart sounds shrill to the solitary ear of the sufferer.” But before this he had written in

one of his letters, at a period when girding himself up to the great work of life : "Tranquillity is not my lot. The prey in early life of passion and calamity, I am now perfectly devoured with an impatience to redeem time, and to be of some lasting benefit to the Church." This passage was actually wrested by a reviewer for the purpose of showing that Mr. Hall was a person of great turbulence, and given to wrath and fury. So malignity can find its food even from the saddest, sweetest sufferings of human hearts !

But his disappointment did not at first permit him to indulge in sentiments betokening such tender calm and equanimity ; on the contrary, the indignation was that of a wounded eagle ; and there is a story told how, passing on his way through Hertfordshire to Cambridge, and stopping at the house of some friend or acquaintance, a lady had the temerity to ignite his feelings by an allusion he was quite unable to bear. In company he appeared lost in thought, absent and involved. She attempted in vain to awaken his attention, or engage him in conversation. She is described as a lady who had retained her vanity although she had lost her charms. At length, impatient with the reveries of her visitor, she attempted to display her wit, and said in a flippant tone : "Ah, sir, if we had but polished *steel* here, we might have secured some of your attention ; but——" "Madam," replied the satirist, "make yourself quite easy ; if you are not polished *steel*, you are at least polished *brass* !"

So, on the whole, we can believe that he was not sorry

to escape from Bristol. We have seen that his residence there was very short, only about five years. It is singular that we meet with few indications of his presence, and yet, during those years of his engagement as a student, assistant minister, and tutor, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey were frequently there. Did he ever meet them? One thinks he must have met them; for Joseph Cottle appears to have been on terms of more than acquaintanceship with Hall, and the period of Hall's first residence in Bristol was the time when this singular coterie were giving material for Cottle's entertaining "Recollections." But perhaps there could be little communion with the strong, well-balanced, and matured mind of Hall. For those were the days when poor Coleridge took upon himself the task of preaching in the Unitarian Chapel in 1796. We read how "the *Rev.* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from Cambridge University," when announced to preach, entertained his audience with a lecture on the Corn Laws; and again, on another occasion, recapitulated the old sermon in reprobation of the Hair Powder Tax. Once, indeed, we find Cottle saying, referring to this period: "A little before, I had been in company with Robert Hall and S. T. Coleridge, when the collision of equal minds elicited light and heat, both of them ranking in the first class of conversationalists, but great indeed was the contrast between them in the pulpit; the parlour was the element for Mr. Coleridge, and the politician's lecture rather than the minister's harangue. We all returned to Bristol with a feeling of disappointment, Coleridge from the little

personal attention paid him, and we from a dissatisfied sense of a Sunday desecrated, and that Mr. Coleridge had mistaken his talent. My regard for him was too genuine ever again to wish to see him in the pulpit." So that the inference seems to be, from this somewhat clumsy paragraph, that Hall was one of the auditors upon the delivery of this singular sermon on the Hair Powder Tax. But this appears to be the only instance recorded of Hall's meeting with any member of the certainly celebrated circle whose residence gives a pleasant and remarkable interest to Bristol in that day. It was, we suppose, to a later period than this that John Foster refers when, in speaking of the conversational attributes of these two eminent men, he says that the words of Coleridge were like those of a necromancer, and those of Hall like those of an emperor.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *LIFE AT CAMBRIDGE.*

MR. HALL removed to Cambridge in the year 1791. There he remained until his change to Leicester in 1806. His residence and pastorate, therefore, at Cambridge, extended over a period of fifteen years; and no doubt this may be spoken of as altogether the most unhappy period of his life. Notwithstanding the very high estimation in which he was held in this distinguished town, receiving honour from the most eminent men there, and the fame which from thence spread his name over the country,—body, soul, and circumstances seem to have been, with him, all out of joint. Yet, of the places of which he was pastor, Cambridge, after he had left it, seemed to enjoy most constantly his visits; and the periodical occasions upon which he visited, for some Sabbaths in the year, the old scene of his pastorate, were occasions of great excitement throughout the town and its various colleges.

When he first went to Cambridge as the pastor of the Baptist chapel there, the Church was in such a state of opinion that, probably, no other minister of the denomi-

nation beside Mr. Hall would have been equal to the post. The previous minister, Robert Robinson, was also a man of rare gifts, differing from those of Mr. Hall, but in their own sphere exceedingly eminent, and quite equal to the refined fastidiousness which governed the taste even of the Dissenting congregation in the university city. Mr. Robinson was a correct, we believe an elegant scholar,—a widely various and extensive reader of the best books,—a speaker, the cunning and charm of whose chaste, affluent, and yet condensed compositions were beyond all praise, as were also the perfectly quiet ease and self-possession with which everything that he said fell from his lips. He had a world of wit and sarcasm which he did not hesitate, when occasion offered, to employ in the pulpit. When he first went to Cambridge, it was not unusual for undergraduates, and even Church dignitaries, to go to the Baptist chapel for the purpose of obviously insulting and annoying the preacher; and several of the anecdotes are most entertaining of the way in which such persons found themselves, in such attempts, caught, as it were, in the talons of some strong bird, and held up, agonized and quivering, before the gaze of the whole audience; and this was done in such a manner as to be perfectly consistent with the character of the scholar and gentleman. Thus the preacher of St. Andrew's became a power in the town. He was feared, and the place and the congregation were respected. Alas!—we think it sad to write it—this great man, the author of some of our sweetest evangelical hymns, in the closing years of his ministry lapsed off into Socinianism,

and carried, for the most part, his congregation with him. Proud of their pastor, the congregation, as is usual in such a case, perhaps exaggerated its sense of its high culture. On the other hand, while many were retreating even far beyond Socinianism into the most dreary regions of scepticism, others could not quite consent to part with the comfortable old truths, and thus the Church was divided.

Mr. Hall's admiration for Dr. Priestley was misunderstood, and the reputation which he had obtained in Bristol for some sympathy with unorthodox sentiment, the knowledge that he was a young man whose culture and scholarship were certainly far above the average of the Dissenting ministers of that time, made him very attractive to a congregation in such a predicament as we have described. Such were the circumstances in which he found himself as a pastor in Cambridge. It was soon discovered that Mr. Hall's doubtful opinions were purely abstract and metaphysical, and did not at all interfere with his presentation of the old evangelical and gospel truth. He conscientiously began by rebuilding, before his growing congregation, the foundations and edifices of Christian doctrine. Some dozen or so of the more advanced Socinians left the Church and held a service in a small room; while with others the exceeding charity and benignant urbanity of Mr. Hall's sentiment and behaviour won their way. It is a fact that at this time, and for many years after, the eminent Dr. Thomas Rees and other anti-Trinitarian ministers were invited by Mr. Hall to occupy his pulpit.

He had dared sometimes to do this in Bristol, where it proved one of the chief causes of offence against him. In Cambridge the step was highly applauded, and proved a means of softening and alleviating irritating prejudices. Unitarians have many varieties. There are, no doubt, forms of thought and opinion among them which evangelic sentiment could not wish to hear uttered in its place of worship; but we suppose Robert Hall would have been glad to hail for his people such ministrations as those represented by James Martineau or William Channing. Nor can we doubt that, in turn, their people would be glad to receive such ministrations as his. It was a difficult course which Mr. Hall had to fulfil. Narrowness of sentiment is not the especial property of evangelical believers. The widest opinions may be found lodged in natures capable of the bitterest intolerance. Shortly after the commencement of his ministry at Cambridge, after preaching one Sunday evening a sermon in which he had dwelt simply and exclusively on the richer hopes of the Gospel, one of the congregation, who had followed Mr. Robinson through all his changes of sentiment, went to Mr. Hall in the vestry, and abruptly and rudely said: "Mr. Hall, this preaching won't do for us; it will only suit a congregation of old women!" "Do you mean, sir," said Mr. Hall, "my sermon or my doctrine?" "Your doctrine, sir." "Why, then, is the doctrine only fit for old women?" "Because," somewhat thoughtlessly answered the interlocutor, "it is just fit for people tottering on the borders of the grave, and who are eagerly look-



ing anywhere after comfort !” “Thank you, sir, for the concession,” said the preacher. “The doctrine will not suit any persons unless it be true ; and if it be true, it is not suited for old women only, but for every order, and equally important for every age !”

It is somewhat curious to us now to attempt to realize that Hall never liked Cambridge. To some of us, who have walked so frequently across the King’s Bridge, remembering the fascination of Frederick Faber’s charming poem, and amidst the sweet meadows and stately trees skirting the banks of the Cam, his dislike seems wonderful. “When,” said Mr. Hall, “I first saw the river Cam, as I passed over the King’s Bridge, I could not help exclaiming : ‘Why, the stream is standing still to see people drown themselves !’ and that, I am sorry to say, is a permanent feeling with me.” His friend, to whom he spoke, questioned the correctness of his impression. Hall instantly replied : “Shocking place for the spirit, sir ! I wish *you* may not find it so. It ought to be the very focus for suicides. Were you ever at Bristol, sir ? There is scenery, sir,—scenery worth looking upon, and worth thinking of ; and so there is even at Aberdeen, with all its surrounding barrenness. The trees on the banks of the Don are as fine as those on the banks of the Cam ; but the river is alive, sir. It falls over precipices, and foams, and dashes so as to invigorate and inspire those who witness it. The Don is a river, sir ; and the Severn is a river ; but not even a poet could so designate the Cam, unless by an obvious figure he termed it *the sleeping river* !”

On another occasion some person reminded him of the beautiful weeping willows hanging over the stream. "Oh, yes, sir," he exclaimed, "*weeping* willows! Nature hanging out signals of distress!" In these and many other expressions, however playful they seem, there was the exhibition of an incurable and growing dislike to the neighbourhood. "It is a dismally flat country, sir; dismally flat!" he exclaimed. No doubt he felt it so; it oppressed him. Many years after, medical men traced to his residence in Cambridge the great calamity which overwhelmed him, and made it the condition of his health that he should live there no longer.

His chapel—a term, by the bye, which he always disliked—speedily became the centre of scholarly and elegant attraction. Not merely the ordinary university students, but noblemen frequently passing through, or occasionally residing in, Cambridge, and even clergymen and High Church dignitaries, thronged to listen to the enchanting charm of the happiest, most forcible, and most perfect English of which our language has ever been the vehicle. The Heads of Houses became alarmed, especially at this thronging of students to listen to the teachings of a Dissenting minister. A meeting was called of the Heads of Houses and Masters of Colleges for the purpose of taking steps to prevent this gross irregularity; and it is possible that something might have been done had not Dr. Mansel, the headmaster of Trinity, and afterwards the Bishop of Bristol, interposed the weight of his great influence. With a

magnanimity which, although it was justice, we know not how sufficiently to admire, he declared that he could not and would not be a party to any such measure. He said he admired and revered Mr. Hall for his genius and his genuine liberality. He went on to say that he had ascertained that Mr. Hall's preaching was not that of a mere partisan, but of an enlightened minister of Christ. And further declared that if he were not the head-master of Trinity, he should most certainly attend Mr. Hall's ministry himself, and that even as it was, his mind underwent a severe struggle before he could determine to relinquish so great a benefit. This settled that question. Shortly after, Dr. Mansel made an opportunity to meet Mr. Hall, and to thank him personally for the benefits his sermons had conferred upon the town, and upon their common Christianity over the whole country.

Dr. Gregory also mentions another circumstance,—that, shortly after this, a mutual friend waited on Mr. Hall from Dr. Mansel to attempt to induce him to enter the Established Church. Dr. Porteous also, the Bishop of London, desired, through a mutual friend, to make Mr. Hall's acquaintance, and this resulted in his visits to the Bishop, at his palace, at Fulham. Lord Hardwicke and many other noblemen had shown him the same consideration at Cambridge; and, somehow, curiously it came to be thought that Mr. Hall and his national fame were as much, if not more, the property of the Established Church than of his own communion. A few sentences from his lips proclaimed the genius

and the culture of the man, and, in the drawing-room or the study, it was soon discovered that his gifts were truly regal, and that he was fitted to adorn any society he entered.

But he was no trimmer; he was no time-server. He lived in a singular period. Shortly after he went to Cambridge, the portentous agitations of the French Revolution caused an ecstasy of wonder and terror all over England; "men's hearts failed them for fear." A craze and panic took possession of men's minds; despotic principles began to assert themselves with unwonted virulence; and Robert Hall became political! The *Quarterly Review*, in its very lengthy estimate and account of the life and works of the great Englishman, regrets and reprobates the re-publication of his political pieces; but *they* are as essential a part of the man as his "Modern Infidelity," or the monody on the Princess Charlotte. It is not very honourable to remember that it was at this time, some Dissenters dressed themselves forth in robes of sycophancy worthy of the times of the Stuarts, and ingeniously sought to prop up the walls of Zion by maintaining the abuses of old Sarum. As is usual with such denouncers of political consistency, it has been truly said that "their piety was all politics and their politics all piety;" and they were prepared to appear as the very patrons of political intolerance. One especially,—we need not name him,—occupying a post which has since become beloved and venerable by a very different example,—published a pamphlet, calling upon all Dissenters to abstain from every political

association ; denouncing them as disaffected towards Government, and even going so far as to insinuate that the gross outrage committed on Dr. Priestley was not altogether undeserved. Mr. Hall replied in what is confessedly a masterpiece both of satire and of eloquent and indignant invective. He replied to this piece entitled "Zeal without Innovation," by his pamphlet entitled "Christianity consistent with a Love of Freedom," and it is not too much to say that the splendour of this utterance is so great that something would have been wanting to the knowledge of Mr. Hall's mind had it not been included in his works. Replying to the wicked attack upon the venerable and honoured name of Priestley, he indulges in a eulogy, delicate, elegant, and luminous in the highest degree.

But desirous of conveying to our readers some idea of the eloquence of this noble performance, we would ask them to read the following, on—

#### THE AGE OF THE GREAT FRENCH REVOLUTION.

"Had he (the writer to whom Mr. Hall was replying) known, to apply, the remark with which his address commences, on the utility of accommodating instruction to the exigence of times, he would have been aware, that this is not a season for drawing off the eyes of mankind from political objects. They were, in fact, never turned towards them with equal ardour, and we may venture to affirm, they will long continue to take that direction. An attention to the political aspect of the world is not now the fruit of an idle curiosity, or

the amusement of a dissipated and frivolous mind, but is awakened and kept alive by occurrences as various as they are extraordinary. There are times when the moral world seems to stand still ; there are others when it seems impelled towards its goal with an accelerated force. The present is a period more interesting, perhaps, than any which has been known in the whole flight of time. The scenes of Providence thicken upon us so fast, and are shifted with so strange a rapidity, as if the great drama of the world were drawing to a close. Events have taken place, of late, and revolutions have been effected, which, had they been foretold a very few years ago, would have been viewed as visionary and extravagant ; and their influence is yet far from being spent. Europe never presented such a spectacle before, and it is worthy of being contemplated, with the profoundest attention, by all its inhabitants. The empire of darkness and of despotism has been smitten with a stroke which has sounded through the universe. When we see whole kingdoms, after reposing for centuries on the lap of their rulers, start from their slumber, the dignity of man rising up from depression, and tyrants trembling on their thrones, who can remain entirely indifferent, or fail to turn his eye towards a theatre so august and extraordinary ! These are a kind of throes and struggles of nature, to which it would be a sullenness to refuse our sympathy. Old foundations are breaking up ; new edifices are rearing. Institutions which have been long held in veneration, as the most sublime refinements of human wisdom and

policy, which age hath cemented and confirmed, which power hath supported, which eloquence hath conspired to embellish and opulence to enrich, are falling fast into decay. New prospects are opening on every side, of such amazing variety and extent, as to stretch farther than the eye of the most enlightened observer can reach."

The whole of this pamphlet flows along in the same charming rhythm, broken only by some sharp satire rushing in like a fine discord, and giving effect to the grandeur and brilliancy of the whole. There came another occasion. The liberty of the Press was assailed in a sermon by Bishop Horsley, and this led to the publication of Mr. Hall's yet more splendid "Apology for the Freedom of the Press and for General Liberty." It is not too much to say that this deserves to take its place by the side of "The Areopagitica" of John Milton. Any view of Mr. Hall's character will be quite incomplete which does not renew the memory of these magnificent words. He was physically a weak, frail man,—a suffering man all this time; but he was courageous in the expression of his convictions, even magnanimous. Perhaps prudence would have said: "You are in Cambridge; you are the beloved of University Halls; your reputation is high with Bishops; hold your peace! You need say nothing either on one side or the other!" He spoke out; he was pretty severely condemned at the time. But his pamphlets are fine exemplifications, not merely of resolute faithfulness, but of ingenious and eloquent characterization. Take the following, in reply

to those whom the magnificent genius of Burke and his sensitive alarms were filling with morbid fear.

“Mr. Burke, an author whose splendid and unequalled powers have given a vogue and fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason the encounter would not be difficult, but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence? The excursions of his genius are immense. His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation, and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a masterpiece of pathetic composition. So select are its images, so fraught with tenderness, and so rich with colours ‘dipt in heaven,’ that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is, in truth, only too prolific: a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation.”

The following remarks, on the necessity of keeping alive a healthful interest in political questions, have always seemed to us very admirable :—

“A fatal lethargy has long been spreading amongst us, attended, as is natural, with a prevailing disposition both in and out of Parliament to treat plans of reform with contempt. After the accession, peace and pension bills were frequently passed by the Commons, though rejected by the Lords: nothing of that nature is now



ever attempted. A standing army in time of peace was a subject of frequent complaint, and is expressly provided against by the Bill of Rights : it is now become a part of the constitution ; for though the nominal direction be placed in Parliament, the Mutiny Bill passes as a matter of course, the forces are never disbanded ; the more completely to detach them from the community, barracks are erected ; and martial law is established in its utmost severity. If freedom can survive this expedient, copied from the practice of foreign despots, it will be an instance of unexampled good fortune. Mr. Hume terms it a mortal distemper in the British constitution, of which it must *inevitably* perish.

“To whatever cause it be owing, it is certain the measures of administration have, during the present reign, leaned strongly towards arbitrary power. The decision on the Middlesex election was a blow aimed at the vitals of the constitution. Before the people had time to recover from their panic, they were plunged into the American war—a war of pride and ambition, and ending in humiliation and disgrace. The spirit of the Government is so well understood, that the most violent even of the clergy are content to drop their animosity, to turn their affections into a new channel, and to devote to the House of Hanover the flattery and the zeal by which they ruined the race of Stuart. There cannot be a clearer symptom of the decay of liberty than the dread of speculative opinions, which is at present carried to a length in this nation that can scarcely be exceeded. Englishmen were accustomed till of late to

make political speculation the amusement of leisure, and the employment of genius. They are now taught to fear it more than death. Under the torpid touch of despotism the patriotic spirit has shrunk into a narrow compass; confined to gaze with admiration on the proceedings of Parliament, and listen to the oracles of the minister with silent acquiescence and pious awe. Abuses are sacred, and the pool of corruption must putrefy in peace. Persons who a few years back were clamorous for reform are making atonement for having been betrayed into any appearance of virtue by a quick return to their natural character. Is not the kingdom peopled with spies and informers? Are not inquisitorial tribunals erected in every corner of the land? A stranger who, beholding a whole nation filled with alarm, should inquire the cause of the commotion, would be a little surprised on being informed, that instead of any appearance of insurrection, or plots, a pamphlet had only been published. In a Government upheld by so immense a revenue, and boasting a constitution declared to be the envy of the world, this abject distrust of its own power is more than a million lectures on corruptions and abuses. The wisdom of ages, the master-piece of human policy, complete in all its parts and that needs no reformation, can hardly support itself against a sixpenny pamphlet, devoid, it is said, of truth or ability! To require sycophants to blush is exacting too great a departure from the decorum of their character; but common sense might be expected to remain, after shame is extinguished!"

It was certainly while residing in Cambridge that Mr. Hall gave to the world some of the most sublime illustrations of his great powers. To these we may refer in subsequent pages. In 1800 appeared his celebrated sermon on "Modern Infidelity considered with respect to its Influence on Society." In 1803, upon the occasion of the anticipated French invasion, appeared his "Thoughts suitable to the Present Crisis," and both of these orations have been judged worthy of comparison with any of the greatest performances of ancient or modern eloquence. It was while at Cambridge that he appears to have made the acquaintance of his two biographers—Dr. Olynthus Gregory and Mr. John Greene. The Reminiscences of the latter gentleman have been impeached, but, most likely, from their simple Boswellian character. To us many of the pages appear to be quite charming from their vivid graphic simplicity; they appear to us to present Robert Hall in his happiest and most natural undress. There is abundant evidence, from the affectionateness of Mr. Hall's notes to him, that the two lived, when they met, on the happiest terms of fellowship. Mr. Greene was intelligent and fairly well informed, but he was only a kind of faithful worshipping dog. With him Mr. Hall could be upon the most familiar terms. Mr. Greene was never in danger of losing respect in the presence of his idol, and Mr. Hall was never in danger from the necessity of keeping up the appearance of the great scholar or the great preacher. And to this we owe the appearance of Mr. Greene's little book,

concerning which the worst thing we can say is, would it were larger ! Its most vivid pictures occur after Mr. Hall had left Cambridge as a resident, and refer to the periods when the two friends visited each other ; but it presents many glimpses of Cambridge days which do not appear in other memorials. As to Mr. Hall's discernment of character, we are told that many persons, until they became thoroughly acquainted with him, were uncomfortable in his company, because he appeared to them to be "a discerner of spirits." A London dealer in the corn trade dined with Mr. Hall at the house of Mr. James Nutter, of Cambridge. Mr. Nutter observed Mr. Hall to be very silent at table, and to look very suspiciously at the stranger. After two or three glasses of wine, the stranger retired hastily. On his leaving the room Mr. Hall said : "Who is that person, sir ?" Mr. Nutter informed him that he was an eminent corn dealer from London. "Do you do any business with him, sir ?" "Yes, sir." "Have you sold him anything to-day, sir ?" "Yes, sir ; a large parcel of corn." "I am sorry for it, sir ; that man is a rogue, sir." "Oh, you are quite mistaken, Mr. Hall ; he is a highly respectable man, sir, and can obtain credit for any amount in this market." "I do not care for that, sir ; do you get your account settled as soon as you can, and never do any more business with him." Although Mr. Nutter saw no other reason for it, Mr. Hall's opinion made so deep an impression on his mind that he refused to trust this person any more, who about twelve months after defrauded his creditors, and fled the country.

Towards the close of Mr. Hall's residence in Cambridge, his belief in apparitions, always intense, increased. The position of his lodgings, immediately overlooking St. Andrew's churchyard, was not favourable to a metaphysical student of highly-wrought nerves, a somewhat melancholy, and often even a morbid man. Sitting one evening with Mr. Greene, he said : "Sir, I have actually seen stones rising from those graves in rapid succession, and beat against the church tower like boys playing at fives or tennis ; and I have frequently got up from my books to look, sir, but I could not see anybody. Is not this very strange, sir ? How can you account for it ? Then again, sir ; you know I always hang the key of my room on that nail where you see it, and I have frequently seen it vibrate for some time !" "I dared not smile," says Mr. Greene, "as he was so serious ; and there was no reasoning with him on the subject. Once, however, I ventured to do it. We supped together at the house of a mutual friend. The servant being engaged, the lady went into the cellar to draw some beer, when Mr. Hall observed : 'Why, ma'am, have you been into the cellar at this time of night ?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Why, ma'am, I should have expected to have seen an apparition ; you believe in apparitions, I hope, ma'am ?' The lady, who was very timid, said, tremblingly, 'Yes, sir.' 'That is right, ma'am, and I hope you inculcate the same notion into the minds of your children ; I should, if I had any. The belief in spirits is very salutary ; it produces a tenderness of spirit and conscience, and will preserve them from

materialism, scepticism, and infidelity.'” Mr. Greene attempted to combat Mr. Hall’s notions or prejudices, but, of course, with no effect; and, in fact, whether his ideas of spirits were right or wrong, his mind was unhinged, and the method he took to strengthen it, of reading from five in the morning until eight at night, without any recreation, was scarcely likely to do so.

And now we must approach one of the most affecting passages in the life of this great man—the story of his insanity; he adds another to the singularly illustrious list of eminent men of genius who, apparently, from their very organization, so favourable to the manifestation of spiritual and mental eminence, found it too fragile to sustain their immense nervous activity. Again, it is from the affectionate pages of Mr. Greene we derive most information touching this severe and affecting affliction. Mr. Hall’s first attack appears to have been in 1804. Many such visitations, however, appear much more remarkable than his instance when we remember the exceeding severity of his sufferings, rarely free from acute pain, and such freedom, we suppose, only purchased by opium, which he had even then begun to use; and when we remember the loneliness of his life; it was also very natural, in his instance, that he should brood morbidly over his disappointment of some years since. His was, no doubt, an exquisite and finely strung frame, a mind constantly on the highest poise;—the frame broke down! His friend visited him almost in the first hour of his affliction; he was confined to his bed, and pouring along an incessant stream of incoherent

talk. "I wept to hear him," says Mr. Greene ; "he continued calling upon Mackintosh, and exclaiming, 'I shall be *greater* than Mackintosh ! *greater* than Mackintosh !'" So he was removed from Cambridge to Dr. Arnold's infirmary at Leicester, and there he continued for six weeks. The period of his first visitation was very short. The grief which fell over the congregation and over his friends everywhere was naturally inconceivable, but the grief took immediately a practical form, and, as Mr. Hall was not a man of fortune, £2000 were raised for the purpose of purchasing for him a life annuity. It seems quite shocking to all our human feelings, not to speak of those of exalted reverence which his character awakens, to know that he appears to have been very inhumanly treated in the asylum in which he was confined ; it seems singular to us that his brother, Mr. John Hall, called repeatedly, and was not allowed to see him. And reciting his stories upon his restoration, Mr. Hall said : "Sir, they took away my watch, and confined me in a place which overlooked the ward in which were a number of pauper lunatics practising a variety of ludicrous antics. This sight was enough to make me ten times worse. They were as mad as March hares. I was at times quite insensible. I don't believe Dr. Arnold was aware how I was treated by a lazy keeper. Do you know, sir, to save himself a little time and trouble, being winter, the fellow came at five o'clock, and fastened me down upon my bed, where I could not stir hand nor foot till about eight o'clock the next morning. During this time I had many lucid inter-

vals. He had no business, sir, to leave me so long, but it was to enable him to go away the sooner. You cannot conceive the horror of my situation when I found myself perfectly sensible." This was not the worst. On his way home to Cambridge he called on Mr. Toller, at Kettering,—Mr. Toller preached for him on the following Sunday morning,—but during Mr. Hall's short stay at Kettering an affecting circumstance came to light. Mr. Toller passing behind him, and looking on the graceful and elegantly-formed head of his afflicted friend, observed the scars of some recent contusions. He tenderly inquired the cause. "They are the wounds," said the meek sufferer, "which I lately received in the house of my friends." Mr. Toller wept when the explanation was given. The disclosure was made to a few others, awaking such indignation as we may well conceive against those who had violated this sacred trust.

We have no knowledge of the lucid intervals, no doubt many and wonderful, during the illness. One slight hint he gives us. It was in conversation with some of his attached admirers and friends immediately after his restoration from the first attack. He said: "You, with the rest of my friends, tell me that I was only seven weeks in confinement, and the date of the year corresponds, so that I am bound to believe you; but they appeared to me like seven years. My mind was so excited, and my imagination so lively and active, that more ideas passed through my mind during those seven weeks than in any seven years of my life. Whatever I



had ever obtained from reading or reflection was present to me ; I had all my ideas at my fingers' ends, and could bring them to bear upon any subject." We have even heard, from those to whom Mr. Hall spoke, a yet more intense and vivid description of what appeared to be present to him, as "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ;" the whole of his intellectual life seemed to hang suspended before him in one dread glance.

The autobiography of these insane saints is not less than wonderful. William Walford, a really great, excellent and admirable man, was of course a child indeed compared with Hall ; but his autobiography of the circumstances connected with his insanity constitute one of the most interesting, because one of the most unusual, chapters in the history of the human mind. We could wish we had such a chapter from the Life of Hall, probably one of the stateliest, if not the most stately, of all the children of genius who trod along this desolate way of darkened mind ; and yet what more could we learn than that which one of these immortal and illustrious sufferers has told us :—

“Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,  
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright,  
The screws reversed (a task which, if He please,  
God in a moment executes with ease),  
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,  
Lost, till He tune them, all their power and use.  
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair  
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,  
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,  
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,

Can call up life into his faded eye,  
 That passes all he sees unheeded by :  
 No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,  
 No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals ! ”

To this period we may assign an interesting and sympathetic letter from Mr. Hall's old friend Mackintosh, who was pursuing his distinguished course in Bombay :—

“TO THE REV. ROBERT HALL.

*“ Bombay, September 21st, 1805.*

“MY DEAR HALL,—I believe that in the hurry of leaving London I did not answer the letter you wrote to me in December, 1803. I did not, however, forget your interesting young friend, from whom I have had one letter from Constantinople, and to whom I have twice written at Cairo, where he is. No request of yours could be lightly esteemed by me. It happened to me a few days ago, in drawing up (merely for my own use) a short sketch of my life, that I had occasion to give a statement of my recollection of the circumstances of my first acquaintance with you. On the most impartial survey of my early life, I could see nothing which tended so much to excite and invigorate my understanding, and to direct it towards high, though, perhaps, scarcely accessible objects, as my intimacy with you. Five and twenty years are now past since we first met ; yet hardly anything has occurred since, which has left a deeper or more agreeable impression on my mind. I now remember the extraordinary union of brilliant fancy

with acute intellect, which would have excited more admiration than it has done, if it had been dedicated to the amusement of the great and the learned, instead of being consecrated to the far more noble office of consoling, instructing, and reforming the poor and forgotten. It was then too early for me to discover that extreme purity which, in a mind pre-occupied with the low realities of life, would have been no natural companion of so much activity and ardour, but which thoroughly detached you from the world, and made you the inhabitant of regions where alone it is possible to be always active without impurity, and where the ardour of your sensibility had unbounded scope amidst the inexhaustible combination of beauty and excellence.

“It is not given us to preserve an exact medium. Nothing is so difficult as to decide how much ideal models ought to be combined with experience—how much of the future should be let into the present, in the progress of the human mind. To ennoble and purify, without raising us above the sphere of our usefulness ; to qualify us for what we ought to seek, without unfitting us for that to which we must submit—are great and difficult problems, which can be but imperfectly solved.

“It is certain the child can be too manly, not only for his present enjoyments, but for his future prospects. Perhaps, my good friend, you have fallen into this error of superior natures. From this error has, I think, arisen that calamity with which it has pleased Providence to visit you, which, to a mind less fortified by reason and religion, I should not dare to mention ; and which I

consider in you as little more than the indignant struggles of a pure mind with the low realities which surround it,—the fervent aspirations after regions more congenial to it,—and a momentary blindness, produced by the fixed contemplation of objects too bright for human vision. I may say, in this case, in a far grander sense than that in which the words were originally spoken by our great poet,—

“ ‘ And yet  
The light that led astray was light from heaven.’ ”

“ On your return to us you must surely have found consolation in the only terrestrial produce which is pure and truly exquisite, in the affections and attachments you have inspired, which you were most worthy to inspire, and which no human pollution can rob of their heavenly nature. If I were to prosecute the reflections and indulge the feelings which at this moment fill my mind, I should soon venture to doubt whether, for a calamity derived from such a source, and attended with such consolations, I should so far yield to the views and opinions of men as to seek to condole with you. But I check myself, and exhort you, my most worthy friend, to check your best propensities, for the sake of attaining their object. You cannot live *for* men without living *with* them. Serve God, then, by the active service of men. Contemplate more the good you *can* do, than the evil you can only lament. Allow yourself to see the loveliness of nature amidst all its imperfections; and employ your moral imagination, not so much by bringing

it into contrast with the model of ideal perfection, as in gently blending some of the fainter colours of the latter with the brighter hues of real experienced excellence; thus heightening their beauty, instead of broadening the shade which must surround us till we awaken from this dream in other spheres of existence.

“My habits of life have not been favourable to this train of meditation. I have been too busy, too trifling. My nature would have been better consulted if I had been placed in a *quieter* situation, where speculation might have been my business, and visions of the fair and good my chief recreation. When I approach you I feel a powerful attraction towards this, which seems the natural destiny of my mind; but habit opposes obstacles, and duty calls me off, and reason frowns on him who wastes that reflection on a destiny independent of him, which he ought to reserve for actions of which he is the master.

“In another letter I may write to you on miscellaneous subjects; at present I cannot bring my mind to speak of them. Let me hear from you soon and often. Farewell, my dear friend,

“Yours ever most faithfully,

“JAMES MACKINTOSH.”

It was not many months before he was again seized by a similar attack. The whole circumstances were very affecting. It appears to have been in November, 1805. It was on the Sabbath-day, the sacramental Sabbath. To the amazement of all his friends, including

the officers of the Church, Mr. Hall did not appear at the morning service. In some way or other he was always punctually in the pulpit, but this was, perhaps, frequently owing to the fact, as his frequent fits of absence were known, that his friends looked after him ; but now no one knew where he was. It was thought he might be at Foulmire, and it was feared that he might be ill. However, some service was conducted by those who were there. "But," says Mr. Greene, who was present, "our worst fears were realized. In the afternoon he entered the chapel about ten minutes after the time. As he walked up the aisle he turned to look at the clock. I knew by the wildness of his appearance that it was all over. He went into the vestry, from thence into the pulpit, and, although in a strange and hurried manner, gave out the hymn, prayed, and read very coherently. And then he announced the text, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' " The place was crowded,—that was not singular ; but it was singular, says Greene, that "there were more young noblemen, fellow-commoners, undergraduates, there that afternoon than I ever remember to have seen before or since." As he proceeded he soon became quite incoherent, especially when he came to speak of the time when under Satanic influence, as the moment when we should look to Jesus. The audience was naturally startled with surprise, the officers seemed, as they glanced at one

another, to think they should enter the pulpit, and respectfully conduct him down ; but by that silent understanding which in such moments passes from one to another, the general feeling was to let him alone. In a few moments he seemed to recover himself, raised his hand, passed it over his forehead, and stopped and said, " My friends—I beg your pardon—my head is very bad this afternoon." He went on, however, tolerably connectedly, and closed the service. But it was the sacramental Sabbath. He came down from the pulpit and went into the vestry. The members of the Church waited in suspense after the congregation had dispersed. He would have the cloth laid and the symbols of the service brought out as usual, and then he conducted it in a very calm and collected manner ; but just as he was dismissing the assembly he called out vehemently, " Stop ! I have something very important to say to you. I have to inform you that the millennium has come, the period which we have been hoping for, waiting for, and praying for so long ; it has at length come ! Let us all kneel down and bless God that we have lived to see this day." And after this, his biographer goes on to say, he offered up a prayer in a strain of wildest sublimity. Nobody knew what to do with him. Walking up from the chapel, he passed the gateway of the Castle Inn. Standing there he saw one of his oldest members, named Thurlbone. " Ah, Master Thurlbone," he said, " how do you do ? Be faithful unto death, be faithful unto death, and you shall have a crown of life." Thurlbone never saw Mr. Hall again ; he did not live until Mr. Hall

returned to Cambridge after his second confinement; but the good old man used to say that Mr. Hall's voice and those words were continually sounding in his ears. When the circumstance was mentioned to Mr. Hall, he had forgotten it altogether. Then Mr. Hall went to the house of Mr. Nutter, where he was expected. He was restless and uneasy the whole evening, and when he went to his room he walked about during the greater part of the night. Early in the morning he rose, saddled his horse himself, and rode to his house at Foulmire. Two of his Cambridge friends followed him, for the purpose of quieting his mind, but when he perceived them he went to his bureau, furnished himself, it appeared, with about seventy pounds, ran into the stable, again saddled and mounted the horse, then, without waiting to receive them, galloped across the fields to an inn at Royston. Still his friends followed him, but he would not remain there; he was determined to go on to London, and got as far as Waltham Cross, twelve miles from London. The next day he was taken back to his house at Foulmire. Once in his house he would not allow any one to see him, not even his friend Mr. Greene. Mr. Greene caught a glimpse of him, however. He says: "He was walking and talking like a man in a sleep, his looks were wild, his eyes dim." There seems to have been no absence of affection on the part of his brother, Mr. John Hall. He came to see him, and to consult with his friends as to the ways and means of protection, confinement, and the hope of restoration, and wept bitterly while he talked and



listened. He was his only brother, but Mr. Hall would not see him. Mr. John Hall only obtained a glimpse of him through the window, and then came distressed and weeping away; and they never met again, for the brother died from a fit of apoplexy very shortly after, and before Mr. Hall's restoration. Mr. Greene and Mr. John Hall knew the dreadful aversion their suffering friend had to the place where he had been previously confined, at Leicester, and, naturally enough, determined that he should not return there. They discovered the institution of Dr. Cox, at the Fishponds, near Bristol, and thither he was conveyed; and beneath the superior, wise, kind, and mild treatment of Dr. Cox he continued, until he was not only restored, but *permanently* restored. Indeed, as far as possible in such circumstances, and in such an institution, he appears to have known happiness with Dr. Cox, and some humorous incidents have floated out, illustrating that his wit and sarcasm did not desert him in the time of his distress and disease. His head seemed ever to be the cause of his trouble; and on one occasion, it is said, a visitor, not an inmate of the institution, seeing Mr. Hall, and surprised at seeing him there, said, perhaps with more thoughtlessness than indelicacy, "What! *you* here, Mr. Hall, *you* here! Whatever brought *you* here, Mr. Hall?" And, promptly enough, came the uncomplimentary reply: "What will never bring you here, sir. *Too much here, sir,*" tapping his head; "*Too much here.*"

It was no doubt an awful visitation. Here, in the neighbourhood of Bristol, within two or three miles, was

the mind in ruins of that imperial speaker who, not so long since, had held enchained the multitudes beneath that torrent of altogether unrivalled and lyrical language to which we alluded a few pages since, in his sermon on the present crisis; and now that mind wandering without the pilot will, all its great powers obscured, its rays and solar splendours suffering eclipse. To such a nature one would suppose there must come lucid intervals; but lucid intervals must be, in such a case, even more appalling than to ordinary sufferers. The sense that the sceptre has dropped from the grasp of the will, the dread and fear of departing intelligence, must have been especially fearful to him. Surely that which a great writer has expressed for himself assumes a more tender meaning if we can think of it as the prayer of such a sufferer as Hall:—

“Hark! the awe-whispered prayer, ‘God, spare my mind!’

Dust unto dust, the mortal to the clod,

But the high place, the altar that has shrined

Thine image—spare, O God.”

Before he left the house of Dr. Cox, the physician laid down three inexorable conditions for the future: *first*, Mr. Hall must leave Cambridge, leave it at once, and entirely; *second*, he must practise smoking as a composing habit; it seems that he had only recently taken to smoking, and in the institution at Leicester smoking was absolutely forbidden; *thirdly*, he must enter on marriage life, in order that he might be saved from the morbid penalties of solitude. We shall see, by-

and-by, how he dealt with the third condition. Cambridge, we know, as a place of residence, never had his affections. As to smoking, he appears to have very faithfully followed the advice,—for, as somebody has said, he lived in a chronic state of smoke, and he might be found occupied with his pipe hereafter during most hours of the day. He always thought that sedative effects were beneficial to his health ; that tobacco tended to alleviate the incessant pain under which he suffered, and even in some measure to divert his attention from it. His pipe was his constant companion, even when travelling outside the coach. It should move our affectionate regards to know that he scarcely ever enjoyed a night of painless rest. He could not continue long in bed, it seemed to increase his pain. He was always in the habit of rising very early, lying down on the hard floor and amusing himself, and attempting to wear out the teasings of tormenting agony, by means of his pipe and a book. Mr. Morris tells a story how, on one dark winter's morning, his candle went out, and he, when the family rose, could be found nowhere about the house. Naturally the family became alarmed ; but just as somebody was about to set out with a lantern to search for him, he made his appearance, saying he had traversed the streets to find out a watchman—an “old Charley”—to get from him a light. Of course there were those who regarded this practice with Puritanic condemnation ; they gave him Dr. Adam Clarke's tract on smoking, and by-and-by asked him if he had read it, and what he thought of it ? . He dismissed the

matter in a word. "Sir," said he, "I can't answer Adam Clarke, and I can't give up smoking." So his pipe kept him company from this time forward to the end.

## CHAPTER V.

### *THE PASTORATE AT LEICESTER.*

THERE can be perhaps no doubt that the period of Mr. Hall's residence in Leicester was the happiest of his life ; in that town he seemed to begin life again. He was a married man now, married to one who had every tender consideration for him, a lady who brightened, beautified, and made happy his home. He married neither for rank, property, nor accomplishments. When before his engagement any one commended to his notice a learned and ingenious lady, he more than once replied somewhat impatiently, "I do not want a wife to read Greek, sir ; I can read Greek myself." Mrs. Hall was safe in the simplicity and cheerfulness of his affections ; she was not fond of company, and did not often appear in company, but it is beautifully remarked by one of his biographers, that when she did appear, so far from being eclipsed by the splendour of her husband's company, she always appeared to most advantage in it ; he had the peculiar felicity to invest her with a portion of his own dignity. No doubt she was pre-eminently mighty in the household, and on one occasion, when some kind inquiries were made respect-

ing her, Mr. Hall apologised for her absence by saying, "My wife, sir, is quite well, but she is a perfect Martha, 'careful and cumbered about many things;' we are going to have a friend or two to dine with us, and at such times she is as much engaged as Napoleon would be in the arrangement of his army previous to fighting a mighty battle."

Entering on the pastorate of Leicester, he did pass into a new life. Perfect happiness can, of course, never be the lot of any thoughtful mortal, and Mr. Hall appears to have been no exception to the law which determines the lot of a Dissenting minister to be especially open to the agitations and discomforts attending a situation peculiarly exposed to the caprices and whims of other people. At the time of his entrance upon his duties at Leicester, an irritation existed between the singers and the person who officiated as the precentor. The singers persuaded Mr. Hall to displace him. Mr. Hall found that the poor man felt the indignity so much, that he was compelled to negotiate with the singers to bring about an amicable readjustment, and to reinstate the troublesome clerk. What was Mr. Hall's amused amazement and grotesque annoyance on the Sunday after this settlement, as he was entering the pulpit, to hear the old gentleman announce the verse for the singers to fire their devotions:—

"Now shall my head be lifted high  
Above my foes around,  
And songs of joy and victory  
Within Thy temple sound."

A singular circumstance illustrates the meekness and gentleness, the lowly humanity of the great man. An elderly person who had formerly belonged to Arnsley, and attended the ministry of Mr. Hall's father, was opposed to the invitation given to the son to come to Leicester; he was strongly tinctured with what is called hyper-Calvinism. Mr. Hall called upon him, saying, "We shall be glad to see you at Hervey Lane, even if you could only come occasionally; you were a friend of my father's, and have long been in fellowship with us, and it would pain me very much to have the connection dissolved."

"Ah," said the old man, "I should be but too glad to attend, if you could only preach like your blessed father."

"Well," said Hall, "I preach as well as I can; but you can hardly expect me to preach as well as my father, for you know he was a very eminent man."

"Ah! that's very true," said the old man. And the gentle words, which we can all find it so easy to admire, and should all find it so hard to utter, retained him certainly in the communion, and perhaps secured not only his friendship but his admiration.

It was, we believe, while he was at Leicester that a proposal was made to him, on the behalf of a London publisher, for a volume of his sermons, for which he was to receive a thousand pounds immediately upon the delivery of the manuscript, with the promise that he would be entirely free from all trouble either from printers or booksellers. The offer came at rather a

tempting time, for by the failure of his London publisher he had lost several hundred pounds, part of the profits arising from his publications; he published very few pieces, but the sale was exceedingly large. Dr. Gregory and Mr. Greene both urged upon him the duty of publication; they told him that his ordinary sermons were frequently incomparably superior to any he had published, and Mr. Greene especially pressed upon him the consideration of *the thousand pounds*,—rather a forcible argument when we remember that Mr. Hall was not a rich man. His income was probably about the same as that of the private means of the then Prime Minister of England, William Pitt,—all that *he* was worth in the world was but three hundred a year apart from the income of his office. Still Mr. Hall was obstinate. “Sir,” said he to Mr. Greene, “you talk like a man of business—a man who has been accustomed to work for money. Why, sir, I could not write for money. Impossible! I should be continually thinking of the rule of three. If a volume of sermons were to fetch a thousand pounds, how much would it be for a sermon, and how much for a page, and how much for a line? Why, sir, it would so engross my imagination I could not get on at all; the very process would stupefy me.” Although Mr. Hall had retired from his ministry at Cambridge, after a pastorate of fourteen years,—during which period, while he had been universally beloved for his character, he had also won, for his exhibition of the highest degree of intellectual greatness, the admiration of the highest dignitaries and scholars of a city remarkable at once



for its fastidious taste, its secular culture, and for its High Church prejudices,—it cannot be matter of surprise that, where he had been accustomed to speak so long, other ministers were heard with comparative indifference. Mr. Hall, therefore, refused to visit Cambridge until his place had been filled; then, in the autumn of the following year, he and Mrs. Hall together visited the old spot, and it appears to have been an amazing jubilee. All his old friends gathered round him, not merely from the neighbourhood, even from London they poured down to Cambridge; the distinguished persons of the university crowded in again, and the chapel was thronged in every part an hour before the time of service. The weeks of his stay were pleasantly devoted to festivities amongst his old friends. Soon after he arrived, when he was told of the excitement which would wait upon his arrival, he jocosely exclaimed, “But I don’t know what I shall preach about, sir! I have not brought a sermon with me; I have not even a scrap of writing. You may search all my pockets, sir; you may search all my portmanteaus, sir, if you like; not a scrap, sir.” Every sermon was delivered without notes, but perfectly arranged in his mind by two or three hours’ previous retirement. These visits were repeated about every two years.

Some of the reminiscences of Mr. Greene, as we have already said, are really Boswellian in their graphic, abrupt, but vivid delineations. To omit them from a Life of Hall would be impossible; to recast them in our own language would be as absurd as to recast the pages

of Boswell's story of Johnson's life. The following description of the trip of the two friends—shortly before Mr. Hall's removal to Bristol—to Bradgate, the ancestral and personal home of the beautiful and beloved Lady Jane Grey, seems to us a delightful little insight into the social character and pleasant homeliness of the man. "Mr. Hall," says Mr. Greene, "proposed my driving him, the next day, to Charley Forest and Park, to see the ruins of the house in which Lady Jane Grey lived. We set off the following morning, which was the first of September. He made his calculation as to time, and told Mrs. Hall that we should return to dinner by three o'clock. As soon as he was seated in the gig, with his pipe, he said, 'Stop a few minutes, sir; we shall want a book.' He accordingly left the gig, and, after procuring Cowper's Letters, took a large dose of laudanum, from a fear of pain in his back. He was to-day in high spirits, and talked incessantly. When passing the bridge, on the entrance to Leicester, Mr. Hall said, '*There* is a fine meadow! and *there* is the abbey! and *there* is the gate. *There*, sir, is the entrance to the castle; that is the very gate through which Cardinal Wolsey passed, in great distress as a prisoner. Only look, sir; we may imagine that we hear him exclaim, "Had I served my God as I have served my king, He would not have forsaken me in my old age;" and *there* he died, sir!'

"Mr. Hall stopped to light his pipe, at the house of one of his members. On his return to the gig, he resumed the subject of his removal to Bristol, which was

uppermost in his mind, and continued it until we arrived at the village public-house at Newton, where we left the horse and chaise. After engaging a guide, we began to ascend the hill, which was very steep. Mr. Hall held his pipe in one hand, and his hat in the other, and frequently turned round, to point out the extensive and beautiful prospect which opened before us. As soon as we had reached the summit of the hill, we sat down on a broken piece of rock. The air was very bracing, and Mr. Hall was in ecstasy. 'How fine is this scene, sir! There, sir, is a wonderful prospect! On a fine, clear day, from this spot you may see seventeen counties, and objects at the distance of seventy miles. Yonder, sir, is Leicester; we can just discern the houses. What a contrast between this and Leicester! How still we are, sir! What a divine stillness! We may imagine ourselves the only beings in the universe; yet how many millions are living in the distance! Only think, sir; with all their pursuits, their anxieties, their hopes, their fears, their pleasures, and their sorrows! Yet how still we are, sir—not a sound to be heard. We are above them. We cannot see one of them; but the eye of the Deity sees them all!' His imagination now became exceedingly brilliant, and he appeared in all the glory of his powerful intellect, which it is impossible to reflect. 'Think of Leicester, sir,' he continued; 'there all is bustle and anxiety: some are in the streets, some in shops and counting-houses, and others at their looms, full of care and anxiety; yet how easy we are, sir.' After a momentary pause, we imagined that we heard

voices in the distance. 'Perhaps it is an echo, sir,' said Mr. Hall; 'I have heard that there is one in this neighbourhood, and probably this is the spot.' He then called out very loudly, and the echo responded from a distant part of the forest.

"When he had rested, Mr. Hall requested the guide to show us the nearest way to the house and park. The ground on the side of the hill being very slippery, from the loose stones and dry weather, I offered my arm to Mr. Hall, which he declined, saying, 'Oh no, sir; what! do you take me for an old man, sir? do you think that I cannot walk alone, sir? You should understand human nature better than that, sir; if a man *is* getting into years, he never likes to be reminded of it.'

"On reaching the park, we had a view of the ruins of the house. Mr. Hall observed: 'What a set of barbarians they must have been, sir, to destroy such a magnificent house as this was; they were worse than Goths and Vandals! What a size it must have been, sir! I am told they carried away sufficient bricks to build a whole street in Leicester: only think, sir, to build a whole street! We are now on classic ground. Here Lady Jane Grey studied Plato, the divine Plato: what a beautiful spot it must have been to have studied Plato in!' Then, approaching the house, and surveying it, he exclaimed: 'Oh that we did but know the room she occupied! Only think, sir; a poor hapless young lady of eighteen, taken reluctantly from such retirement and studies, to be crowned. There was no ambition on her part; it was all Northumberland's doing!' Then, with

great rapidity, he ran over the events of her short life, from the intrigue of Northumberland, to the cruelty of Mary, in shedding the blood of her innocent victim. After exploring the ruins, we visited the fish-ponds, and went from thence into the valley, where there was a fine purling stream, that fed the ponds. 'Only listen, sir,' he said, 'to those beautiful notes produced by this water rippling over the pebbles ; it is like music. Hark ! one, two, three ; why, sir, you may trace all the notes of the gamut !'

"At a short distance from this brook, having a full view of the rocks, we sat down leisurely to notice the broken fragments. The line of rocks on one side of the valley exhibited a variety of fantastic shapes, like a heap of rough hewn quarries, half prepared for the builder. 'Here, sir,' said Mr. Hall, 'is a temple of nature, where the fancy and imagination may revel for days. Come, sir, let us feast our eyes ; this is a scene to dwell upon. Let us view it leisurely ; let it fill our minds, so that we may carry it away with us. Why, sir, if these woods were within two or three miles of Leicester, I should walk here every day ;' then, looking round and musing upon the scenery, he again exclaimed : 'What a delightful place to study Plato in ! Only conceive, sir ; a little more than four such lives as mine, and Lady Jane was walking here, with Plato in her hand, and Roger Ascham by her side. How short the time appears !' On observing the guide at a distance, he said : 'How well the man behaves, sir ; he does not offer to come near to interrupt, or to hurry us. I dare say the poor

man wonders what there can be here to interest us so much ; he has been over the grounds so often that the beauties of the scene make not the least impression on him.' After musing here for some time, we went to the grove, the trees of which form a long avenue. The branches were of immense size, and shoot out to the distance of seventy feet across the path, through the line of trees on the opposite side, forming a kind of arched roof, and so intermingled, that the scene resembled a temple in darkness. On our entering the avenue, the sun, which had been clouded for some time, suddenly burst forth. 'There, sir,' said Mr. Hall, 'how grand is that light and shade ; how beautifully they are blended ! It appears as if the sun was lighting up the scene for the coming of the Lord of the temple !' We walked from one end of the grove to the other, and plucked a branch from one of the large beech-trees, which we took home as a curiosity. This brought us to the village churchyard. I looked at my watch, and found, to my astonishment, that it was past three o'clock, the hour fixed for dinner, and we had yet eight miles to travel. Mr. Hall said : 'You quite surprise me, sir ; we have been so interested as to lose all ideas of time. Well, never mind, sir ; we will just look at this pretty churchyard : how rural it is, sir.' Then, fixing his eyes upon one of the graves, he paused for a moment, and with his hat in one hand, and the pipe, which had been long exhausted, in the other, he placed himself in a devotional attitude, and exclaimed :—

“ ‘Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre !’

“On leaving the churchyard, we returned to the carriage-road, and having half a mile to walk for the gig, to save Mr. Hall unnecessary exertion, I proposed that he should wait till I fetched it. ‘That, sir, is the very thing, and I will meanwhile go into one of these cottages and light my pipe ; I can do you no good, sir, as I have no money in my pocket.’ On my return he related the following adventure. ‘There was a curious old man in the cottage where I lighted my pipe, who knew me very well ; so we entered into conversation on some of the high points. He was formerly one of Mr. Vaughan’s hearers, and went to Leicester every Sunday, for the purpose of attending his church ; but has lately left Mr. Vaughan’s ministry, on account of his sentiments. If what he says be correct, Mr. Vaughan is a rank Antinomian. The old man now attends the village church, and appears better satisfied. He told me that he remembered hearing my father at Arnsby. My father, sir, was very doctrinal in his preaching, and more attached to Calvinism than I am. If there are any sentiments to which I could subscribe, they are Baxter’s.’ This led to some remarks upon Dr. Watts’s sermons, of which Mr. Hall very much approved, particularly that which treats upon the hidden life of a Christian. He also spoke highly of the hymns which are appended to those sermons, and remarked, that it was extraordinary

that they were not printed with his collection till of late years. As we rode along, he repeated the following hymn, with which he was greatly pleased :—

“ ‘How vast the treasure we possess !  
How rich Thy bounty, King of grace !  
This world is ours, and worlds to come ;  
Earth is our lodge, and heaven our home,’ etc.

“This brought us to Leicester. On passing the bridge, Mr. Hall, having broken his pipe, rose in the gig, and tossed it over the wall into the river. This he considered a feat. He then complained of thirst, and requested me to pull up at a friend’s house, and beg the favour of a glass of cold water. Perceiving that he was heated, I begged him to refrain : however, he was determined. ‘There, sir, I was very thirsty, and have taken two large goblets of water.’ We reached home between five and six in the evening.”

Mr. Greene furnishes us with some other glimpses of their rambles and wanderings together, which appear to have been many. Here is one which, in the order of time, perhaps, preceded that which we have just narrated ; but, like so many biographers, Mr. Greene is somewhat careless in the matter of dates. Mr. Hall appears to have been on a preaching visit to Oundle, in Northamptonshire, but had to fulfil an important engagement in Leicester.

“On the Saturday morning,” says Mr. Greene, “we left Oundle, for Leicester. Mr. Hall was fond of fast driving, but wished for a long time at the different



places where we rested. 'Now give me all the time you can, sir, when we stop. It is a maxim with me, that the present place is the best place. You know, sir, I can lie on three chairs, and ease my back. We need not hurry to get to Leicester, sir; it will be time enough if we arrive by ten or eleven o'clock. Mrs. Hall will not expect me earlier. She will be surprised to see me before that time; and I do not want to meet any person to-night.' I remonstrated, knowing the difficulty there was in getting him to start. 'Well then, sir, we will say not before nine o'clock, if you please.' This preliminary settled, he started the subject of the funds. 'I do not know,' said he, 'how it is that I never could understand the principle of the funding system, particularly the sinking-fund. I cannot see how the debt is to be redeemed by it; perhaps it is owing to my stupidity. Now, sir, I wish that you would give me some information about this financial arrangement.' I said, that unless the sinking-fund was intended to mystify and deceive, I could not account for it. Would it not be better to pay off, annually, a portion of the debt, on a plan similar to that which is adopted in common life? For example,—if a man owes a thousand pounds, and has no capital to pay it, but is in the receipt of an income of three hundred a year, he agrees with his creditors to pay one hundred per annum towards the amount for which he is indebted. Thus the debt and interest are annually diminished, and both parties are benefited. Mr. Hall condemned the present system, and then launched forth against it. I soon dis-

covered that he understood more of the subject than he would acknowledge ; which was his usual plan for eliciting conversation. He was well acquainted with the writings of Dr Price, and other political economists ; he then eulogized Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations,' especially his principles of free trade and subdivision of labour. 'These,' said Mr. Hall, 'are sure principles, sir ; and they are destined to triumph.' In short, there was not a subject connected with general knowledge, that could be introduced, the general principles of which he did not understand. Persons were sure to derive instruction from Mr. Hall, if they drew him into conversation ; either by not assenting, or by modest inquiries for information. His talents would have rendered him a first-rate statesman, being well acquainted with international law, and the rights of belligerents. He had read and studied Grotius, Vattel, and the most celebrated authorities. By his brilliant and overpowering eloquence, he would have shone as a star of the first magnitude, in either House of Parliament. With the science of jurisprudence he was well acquainted ; he had an extensive knowledge of the common, civil, and canon laws. 'I have heard barristers, with whom he has conversed, and who were absolutely astonished at his knowledge on the subjects, exclaim, 'Where could this man get his wisdom ?' They have frequently declared, that they learnt more in two or three hours from him, respecting the general principles of law, than they had done from books.

"We arrived safely at Leicester, after breaking the

shafts of my gig, by the additional weight which was thrown upon them by a contrived horizontal position of Mr. Hall for the purpose of alleviating the pain in his back. Mrs. Hall was anxious to learn whether Mr. Hall was aware that it was the time of the assizes at Leicester, when many of the barristers attend his meeting. I told her that, as he had not alluded to the circumstance, I did not think he recollected it. She begged that I would not mention it, as it was too late, and it might make Mr. Hall uneasy; and we knew that it would not matter if he were thrown upon his resources.

“When Mr. Hall arrived at the meeting, there were a number of the barristers present. As soon as he had entered the pulpit, I saw by the expression of his countenance that he recognised them; but it was remarkable that, had he been informed of the event, he could scarcely have fixed on a subject more useful and appropriate. The discourse was founded on these words: *The truth as it is in Jesus*; not as it is in Moses, in Paul, or any other authority, but *the truth as it is in Jesus*. The introduction was one of the most beautiful that I ever heard from him: it was very argumentative, and unusually long. I can only remember the two leading ideas, which were, ‘The advantages and disadvantages which the Jews laboured under, during the personal ministry of our Lord, compared with the advantages and disadvantages we have from testimony; in the unimpeachable character of the witnesses of His miracles, and the fact of His resurrection, with the general

diffusion and the moral effects of Christianity.' He first stated, that many persons were disposed to envy the Jews the advantages they enjoyed during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ, and to consider that, if placed in similar circumstances, they would have believed in the Messiah. He showed, by the induction of several particulars, that this was a fallacious sentiment; that these persons did not take into account the erroneous expectations, almost universally cherished among the Jews, of a reigning, temporal Messiah, who would deliver them from the Roman yoke, and exalt them in the scale of nations. The disappointment consequent upon the Redeemer's advent; the meanness of His birth and appearance; the prejudices excited by education; the opposition of the priests and the whole Jewish Sanhedrim, in the prospect of the abolition of the Mosaic ritual, and their ancient rites and customs; as well as the traditions of the Pharisees and Sadducees; all which wounded their national pride;—these were so many obstacles to the reception of *the simple truth as it is in Jesus*. Then he contrasted the advantages we now enjoy, in the calm investigation of the truth from the fulfilment of prophecy; the testimony of those who were eye-witnesses of the Redeemer's majesty; and the final spread of the Gospel, through their sufferings and death. These were nicely weighed and adjusted, until he satisfactorily showed the advantages to be decidedly in favour of embracing *the truth as it is in Jesus* at the present period. But it is impossible to give the reader an accurate conception of Mr. Hall's

masterly argument. The whole sermon was delivered without the use of notes, and with astonishing rapidity, so that it became difficult to follow him. It was observed, that most of the barristers appeared to feel oppressed by the closeness of attention which was requisite fully to estimate the weight of evidence produced. Any person, who was not in the secret, would have imagined that it was prepared for the occasion.

“As we were walking home, I said to Mr. Hall, ‘What an astonishing sermon you have given us this morning, sir! I never heard you deliver a discourse with so much rapidity.’ ‘Why, sir,’ he replied, ‘my only chance of getting through was by galloping on as fast as I could. I was thrown on my resources, and had no conception of its being the assizes till I entered the pulpit and saw the counsellors. I never preached from that subject before, sir.’ I said, ‘But when could you prepare the sermon, sir? for we have been together all the week, and you have had no time.’ ‘Why, sir, I will tell you: I thought of it at intervals, and during the night. Beddome’s Sermons, which you lent me, suggested the subject, and I fixed the outline in my mind, and perhaps was excited by the unexpected appearance of men of talent.’”

Yet another pleasant piece from Mr. Greene’s interesting book, which we rather quote as we are sure that it is rare, and has very much passed out of memory.

“I received,” says Mr. Greene, “the following letter at Oundle, in Northamptonshire:—

“ ‘July 21st, 1822.

“ ‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I write in the utmost haste to inform you that we shall be very happy to see you and Mrs. Greene next Saturday, to spend the Lord’s-day with us, and as much time afterwards as you can make convenient. I shall most certainly be at home ; and it will be most gratifying to me and Mrs. Hall to see you and Mrs. Greene. As to returning with you, I must at present decline it ; I have already been so very much out this summer, and have other engagements. Mrs. Hall unites with me in most affectionate remembrances to you and Mrs. Greene.

“ ‘I am, dear Sir, yours most affectionately,

ROBERT HALL.’

“I immediately went to Leicester alone in my gig, with the hope of bringing Mr. Hall back to spend a week with us. He consented to my request, on my promising to bring him home by the following Sabbath. Before commencing our journey, he prayed earnestly for his family, and commended his friend and himself to the protection of Almighty God, particularly praying ‘for preservation, *that the stones of the field may be in league with us.*’

“We had not been long on the road before the sky became overcharged, and it seemed to gather clouds as for a tempest. We had many indications of a storm before our arrival at Market Harborough. On entering the town, I said : ‘I hope, sir, you will lay down your pipe, as it does not look well to smoke when passing

through a town.' 'Oh dear, sir,' was his reply, 'that does not signify,—it is not as if I were a stranger. Everybody knows me here, sir. It will be thought nothing of.' 'But indeed, in a town, sir, it does not look well.' However, when we reached the first house, he laid down his pipe, and said with great archness and playfulness: 'There, to please your majesty, I have laid down my pipe.'

"While we were at dinner, the tempest came on. There was much thunder and lightning, accompanied with violent rain. Mr. Hall was quite delighted at having escaped the storm. As soon as the weather cleared up, we set off for the next stage. He lighted his pipe at the first turnpike, and became exceedingly interesting. The direction to the man at the gate was 'to place his thumb at the top of the pipe, and put the bowl into the fire;' but when he brought it, he put the pipe into his mouth to try if it was lighted, which Mr. Hall observed, and chided him for so doing. Immediately the man wiped the pipe with his apron, and presented it, which called forth the thanks and admiration of Mr. Hall, adding, 'How very respectfully the man behaved to us, sir!' When we reached Rockingham Forest, he said: 'I never was here before. How beautiful! how natural! This is true forest scenery. Only think, sir; we may imagine ourselves carried back to the time of Robin Hood and Little John. I dare say it was in much the same state at that period, and extended to the other forests below Nottingham. Only observe those thickets, sir; what advantages they afford

for concealment ! We may imagine Robin Hood and Little John in one of them.' As we advanced towards Corby, I told him that he would see a dull, poverty-looking village. After we had passed through it, as nothing seemed to escape his notice, he said : ' I cannot agree with you, sir, that it is a poverty-looking village. I am agreeably disappointed. I observed there were no broken panes in the windows,—and that is no sign of poverty, sir. Then the houses are mostly built of stones, pointed,—that is no sign of poverty, sir. Then many of the chimneys are built of the same kind of stone, pointed, and in a good state of repair,—that is no sign of poverty, sir.' As I perceived that he was determined to like it, from a playful opposition, I dropped the subject.

" We observed another storm gathering, and therefore hastened towards Welden. Just as we entered the town, and were under shelter in a gateway at the inn, the rain again fell in torrents. After tea, it cleared up. I again ordered the gig to be prepared. The face of the sky appeared very doubtful when we commenced the last stage, which was a distance of eight miles. Suddenly the sun burst through the clouds, and, for the last five miles, we had a beautiful serene summer's evening. Mr. Hall was in high spirits, and in a devotional frame of mind. He considered that our escape from the violence of the tempest was quite providential. ' Why, sir,' said he, ' if we had been exposed to this tempest, we might have taken our deaths from cold. We could have found no shelter, for the trees would have been



dangerous; and no clothing could have protected us. We should have been wet through.' 'It is a great mercy, sir,' I replied. He then exclaimed: '*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.*' I added: '*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*' Mr. Hall continued: '*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*' and then, addressing me: 'Go on, sir. I think we can manage, between us, to repeat the whole Psalm, sir.' I continued: '*Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*' Thus we responded, alternately, to the end, and saw fresh beauties in this song of thanksgiving. We arrived safe, about nine o'clock, at the end of our journey.

"Mr. Hall was delighted with this part of the country, and particularly with the beautiful woodland scenery, which is studded with noblemen's seats for several miles in a semi-circular form, from south to north, near Oundle. The first is Barnwell Castle, the seat of the Duke of Buccleuch. Next to this is the seat of Lord Lilford; then the residence of Lady Fitzpatrick, at Fanning Woods, formerly belonging to Lord Ossory. Then the lordship of Biggen, now belonging to Watts Russell, Esq.; Lord Cardigan's seat at Dean; Lord Westmoreland's at Abthorps; Earl Craysfort's at Elton; and last, not least, Earl Fitzwilliam's, that prince of noblemen, at Milton. - Such a cluster of noblemen's seats, perhaps, is not to be found so near any other market town in the kingdom. I have been informed that, during the last war, oak timber was annually shipped

from these woods and forests to the amount of half a million sterling, for the use of his Majesty's dockyards. Mr. Hall appeared interested with this information. A return of the pain in his back unfortunately prevented him from riding out to gratify his curiosity. He was therefore necessitated to have recourse to large doses of laudanum every night, in order to alleviate his extreme suffering. He generally took a pipe with him when he retired to his chamber, being in the habit of rising in the night and reclining on the bedside carpets for the purpose of smoking and reading for an hour or two when wakeful or when the pain came on. I lent him a volume of Beddome's Sermons, which he read through during his visit. I inquired his opinion of the sermons. He was delighted with them, and surprised when I told him that they had not reached a second edition. 'I am astonished at that, sir; for they are very evangelical, and there is a good choice of subjects. There is a bone, and a sinew, and marrow in them, that shows a great mind. I like them, sir, because they are so full of thought. They furnish matter for the mind to dwell upon. It is true they are very short; but it must be remembered that they are posthumous, and were never intended for publication. They are little more than skeletons. I like them the better for their compactness. It shows the taste of the age, sir. They would have been more approved had they been long, verbose, and showy. They supply materials for thinking, sir. Some persons, however, don't like to think, sir. In short, sir, I do not know any sermons of the kind equal to them

in the English language. I believe they are destined to be much more extensively read and appreciated.' I mentioned several instances in which we had lent them, and they had been found eminently useful, in families, and in sick chambers, where they could be read in twenty minutes, without fatigue to the patient," etc.

It is unfortunately the case that the information we possess concerning Mr. Hall's social life is of this broken and fragmentary character, and derived in scraps of information which have never found their way as yet into one compact volume. Recently Dr. Frederick Trestrail, a very well-known Baptist minister, and formerly foreign secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society, has gathered up some of his recollections; for he was a student at the Baptist Academy at Bristol during the last years of Mr. Hall's life, and appears to have been admitted, as a young man, into kindly social familiarity with him. Mr. Trestrail's first pastorate, however, on leaving Bristol was at Clipstone, at no great distance from Leicester, and there he appears to have picked up some traditions of Mr. Hall's visits, during his Leicester days, to the little village chapel of which Mr. Trestrail was afterwards pastor. We have heard the following incident ourselves, but Dr. Trestrail shall tell the story; it certainly presents Mr. Hall in another light.

"The incident I am about to relate happened on his return to Leicester from one of these 'Clipstone meetings.' The snow was falling fast as he called at Master York's (a pious village innkeeper). At first he declined

to dismount, but ultimately yielded to urgent solicitation to stay and see if the weather would clear. He went into the little inner room (where I heard the story,—I can almost fancy I am there now), and, having taken a pipe, was soon absorbed in conversation. By-and-by he rose to go, but Master York would not hear of it.

“‘No, Mr. Hall, please. It is dark and stormy. The snow has been a-falling ever sin’ you came, and is deep now. I wouldn’t turn a dog out in sich a night. You can’t go, for you would lose your way, and come to harm; and, dear sir, I couldn’t stan’ *that*.’ Mr. Hall having looked out, saw that it would be imprudent to go, and consented to stay the night.

“After awhile Master York suggested that, as he was detained by the weather, he should preach.

“‘Preach to whom, sir?’

“‘Why, to the people of the village, to be sure.’

“‘Whoever would come out to hear me, sir, on such a night as this?’

“‘Well, now, Mr. Hall, if I get some of ’em to come, won’t you say a few words?’

“‘Well, sir, if any of the neighbours *do* come I will.’

“In a moment, overjoyed with his success, the dear old man sallied out with a lantern, sent his wife in one direction and his son in another, to tell the good folk that Mr. Hall was there, and would preach.

“‘Why, Mr. Trestrail, the whole village was astir in no time. You could see lanterns everywhere. This room was soon filled, and then we had to borrow chairs and forms, for the big ’un was filled too; and so Mr. Hall

stood in the doorway and preached to us. And didn't he go on grand ! It would have done your heart good to have been there and heard 'un.'

" 'Do you remember what he preached about, Master York ?'

" 'Do I remember ? Likely thing I should ever forget that. He preached from this text : *I saw no temple therein.* He talked in so wonderful a manner about the glory of heaven, and the worship which the saints would offer to God, that I forgot where I was, and thought I was up there. Yes, indeed, my dear pastor, my poor little public that night was turned into the house of God and the gate of heaven. After supper Mr. Hall became silent, and I heard him sigh two or three times. So I said to 'un, "Anything the matter, Mr. Hall ?"

" ' "Yes, Master York, very much. I am in great doubts as to my state. I sometimes fear I have never been converted, and it distresses me exceedingly."

" ' "Why, sure, Mr. Hall, *that* canna be anyhow. How do you think you could a-preached as you did to us to-night if you hadn't a been converted ?"

" ' "Master York, what do you consider to be a decisive proof of conversion ?"

" ' "Why, then, Mr. Hall, I think that if a man loves and fears God he is about right. Don't you now ?"

" ' "Love and fear God, Master York ? I do, indeed I do."

" ' "And then, Mr. Trestrail, how he did go on, to be sure. I never heard such things about God Almighty before, except in the Bible. He talked about our world,

and then about other worlds ; about the sun, and the moon, and the stars, as all made by Him ; about His wisdom and power ; about sin and the awful ruin it had caused ; about God's pity and love for us poor sinners, sending His dear Son to die for us ; about pardon and life—*everlasting life*—that I wor indeed quite amazed like. It seemed to me as if he could ha' gone on talking about these things for ever and ever. Oh, sir, it wor wonderful, wonderful, indeed it wor. Though the clock had struck twelve I wor sorry when it wor over. He got up, took my hand—ah, so kindly—and said,—

“ “Master York, I am thankful that the bad weather stopt me, and that you kept me here. You have lifted a load off my mind, Master York. I shall sleep in peace. Good-night.”

“ ‘Just you think, now, that such a poor creature as I am should really ha' helped such a wonderful a man as that. Why, my dear pastor, I stood there and cried like a babby.’ ”

What a contrast does this remarkable interview present to us ! How widely different these two men, in intellect, attainments, and character ! But not less striking, as affording an instance of the power of simple faith to enable an almost wholly uneducated mind to apprehend and grasp the most vital truths of the Gospel, and to present them in a form so clear and simple as to lift the loftier intellect out of the region of doubt and fear into one of peace and joy.

The limits of this volume being so small, we may not enter at any length into the analysis of Mr. Hall's works

on the vexed question of "Terms of Communion." His contributions to this discussion appeared between the years 1815 and 1818. Perhaps many of our readers will unite with us in regret that so large a space in the works of this eminent writer should be devoted to such a subject; perhaps many will regard it as wonderful that Mr. Hall should have condescended to argue the question at all. He fought against the dogma of many Baptist Churches, that only those who had subjected themselves to 'adult, or believers' baptism, by immersion, had a right to the fellowship of Christian communion, and the principle he maintained was that no Church has a right to establish terms of communion which are not terms of salvation. And really, as has been said, the principle seems obvious and self-evident. An old saint once exclaimed, "What has Satan done? What is become of the communion of saints? Those who could formerly *suffer* together cannot now *sit* together at their Father's table!" The pamphlets of Mr. Hall, in reply to the followers of strict communion, are impressed by his large catholicity of heart, and his pleadings are urged by eloquence, lightened by the delicate shafts of a chastened satire and wit. "Reflect," he says, "on the enormous impropriety of demanding a greater uniformity amongst the candidates for admission into the Church militant than is requisite for union with the Church triumphant,—of claiming from the faithful, while encompassed with darkness and imperfection, more harmony and correctness of sentiment than is necessary to qualify them to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the

kingdom of God,—of pretending to render a Christian society an enclosure more sacred and more difficult of access than the abode of the Divine Majesty,—and of investing every little Baptist teacher with the prerogative of repelling from his communion a Howe, a Leighton, or a Brainerd, whom the Lord of glory will welcome to His presence. Transubstantiation presents nothing more revolting to the dictates of common sense.” In closing the controversy, so far as he contributed to it, he beautifully says that “the time,” he is persuaded, “is not very far remote when it will be matter of surprise that it should have been thought necessary to employ so many words in evincing a truth so nearly self-evident, and the very existence of the controversy remembered only among other melancholy monuments of human imperfection. When the Spirit is poured down from on high, He will effectually teach us that God is love, and that we never please Him more than when we embrace with open arms, without distinction of sect or party, all who bear His image.” Such was the position he took in the discussion which agitated the sect or denomination to which he belonged; but his words have an application far beyond the confines of that communion; the terms of communion form a “middle wall of partition” in many directions beyond that to which Mr. Hall directed his attention. It is even affecting, in such a connection, to find in the life of so distinguished a man and eminent a Christian as the first Lord Teignmouth, one of the founders of the Bible Society, that, while he was residing at Clapham, upon the occasion of Robert



Hall's preaching there, nothing could induce him to hear the celebrated preacher. His son, and successor, in the Life of his Father, with evident admiration, writes: "An instance of Lord Teignmouth's steadfast adherence to his principles occurred on the occasion of the celebrated Robert Hall preaching at Clapham; neither his own curiosity, nor the seductive example of his friends, could induce him to be present; and he assigned as one reason of resisting the temptation, that his resorting to a place of worship not belonging to the Establishment, where sound doctrine might be delivered, might induce others, whom his influence might affect, to follow preachers where sound doctrine was wanting." Truly other persons besides close communion Baptists need to apply Mr. Hall's noble principles on the terms of communion; those principles overleap the barriers and pales erected as signals of intolerance by opinionated or scheming sectaries. Could they be adopted, to be applied, they would be an Irenicon between hostile churches. Sadly it has to be felt that, hitherto, the widened communion has been usually the mark of mere indifference, of Erastian latitudinarianism. It might have been thought that Christ, like a real Irenarch, or magistrate of peace, would unite all believers, and obliterate all distinctions in the force of one strong attractive love to Himself, His person, and His work!

As a pleasing illustration of that catholicity which Mr. Hall commended, we may quote the following tender *éloge*, in which he blends together

## ANDREW FULLER AND THOMAS TOLLER.

“It has rarely been the privilege of one town, and that not of considerable extent, to possess at the same time, and for so long a period, two such eminent men as Mr. Toller and Mr. Fuller. Their merits as Christian ministers were so equal, and yet so different, that the exercise of their religious functions in the same place was as little adapted to produce jealousy as if they had moved in distant spheres. The predominant feature in the intellectual character of Mr. Fuller was the power of discrimination, by which he detected the minutest shades of difference among objects which most minds would confound ; Mr. Toller excelled in exhibiting the common sense of mankind in a new and impressive form. Mr. Fuller never appeared to so much advantage as when occupied in detecting sophistry, repelling objections, and ascertaining with a microscopic accuracy the exact boundaries of truth and error ; Mr. Toller attached his attention chiefly to those parts of Christianity which come most into contact with the imagination and the feelings, over which he exerted a sovereign ascendancy. Mr. Fuller convinced by his arguments ; Mr. Toller subdued by his pathos. The former made his hearers feel the grasp of his intellect ; the latter, the contagion of his sensibility. Mr. Fuller’s discourses identified themselves, after they were heard, with trains of thought ; Mr. Toller’s with trains of emotion. The illustrations employed by Mr. Fuller (for he also excelled in illustration) were generally made to subserve

the clearer comprehension of the subject; those of Mr. Toller's consisted chiefly of appeals to the imagination and the heart. Mr. Fuller's ministry was peculiarly adapted to detect hypocrites, to expose fallacious pretensions to religion, and to separate the precious from the vile; he sat as 'the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap.' Mr. Toller was most in his element when exhibiting the consolations of Christ, dispelling the fears of death, and painting the prospects of eternity. Both were original: but the originality of Mr. Fuller appeared chiefly in his doctrinal statements; that of Mr. Toller in his practical remarks. The former was unquestionably the most conversant with speculative truth; the latter perhaps possessed the deeper insight into the human heart.

"Nor were the characters of these eminent men, within the limits of that moral excellence which was the attribute of both, less diversified than their mental endowments. Mr. Fuller was chiefly distinguished by the qualities which command veneration; Mr. Toller by those which excite love. Laborious, zealous, intrepid, Mr. Fuller passed through a thousand obstacles in the pursuit of objects of public interest and utility; Mr. Toller loved to repose, delighting and delighted, in the shade of domestic privacy. The one lived for the world; the other for the promotion of the good of his congregation, his family, and his friends. An intense zeal for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, sustained by industry that never tired, a resolution not to be shaken, and integrity not to be warped,

conjoined to a certain austerity of manner, were the leading characteristics of Mr. Fuller; gentleness, humility, and modesty, those of Mr. Toller. The secretary of the Baptist Mission attached, in my opinion, too much importance to a speculative accuracy of sentiment; while Mr. Toller leaned to the contrary extreme. Mr. Fuller was too prone to infer the character of men from their creed; Mr. Toller to lose sight of their creed in their character. Between persons so dissimilar, it was next to impossible that a very close and confidential intimacy should subsist. A sincere admiration of each other's talents, and esteem for the virtues which equally adorned them both, secured without interruption, for more than thirty years, those habits of kind and respectful intercourse which had the happiest effect in promoting the harmony of their connections and the credit of religion.

“Much as Mr. Fuller was lamented by the religious public in general, and especially in his own denomination, I have reason to believe there was not a single individual, out of the circle of his immediate relatives, who was more deeply affected by his death than Mr. Toller. From that moment he felt himself nearer to eternity; he accepted the event as a most impressive warning of his own dissolution; and, while a thousand solemn and affecting recollections accompanied the retrospect of a connection which had so long and so happily subsisted, one of his favourite occupations was to revive a mental intercourse, by the frequent perusal of the sermons of his deceased friend. It is thus that

the friendship of high and sanctified spirits loses nothing by death but its alloy : failings disappear, and the virtues of those whose ‘faces we shall behold no more’ appear greater and more sacred when beheld through the shades of the sepulchre. Their spirits are now united before the throne ; and if any event in this sublunary scene may be supposed to engage the attention of Thomas Toller, in his present mysterious elevation, it is probably the desire that the child of his prayers, who now succeeds him in his office, may surpass his example, and be the honoured instrument of turning more sinners to righteousness, and of conducting more sons to glory, than himself.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF ROBERT HALL AS A SPEAKER.*

THIS seems the place and the moment when we may pause to remark upon the position and attributes of Mr. Hall as an orator. It is unspeakably to be regretted that his most competent and able friend, Sir James Mackintosh, died at the very moment when there was an universal expectation that he would contribute, as he had promised, an estimate of Mr. Hall in contrast and comparison with the great classical orators such as Demosthenes, Cicero, etc., etc., and the great French pulpit orators, Massillon, Bossuet, and Bourdaloue. What an essay would this have been! The tender memorial of friendship, and at the same time the competent criticism,—the eulogy, as well as the elegy of one himself a great and gifted speaker, an eminent writer, and endowed especially with the subtle shrewdness and insight of genius, as so many of the admirable and rapid sketches first published in his biography show, fitting him for a work altogether so difficult and so delicate; we cannot but regret it, not merely for the sake of the memory of Hall, but as likely to have been the noblest piece of literary labour wrought

by his illustrious friend. It seems probable that if, as the acclamations of the scholars of all ages seem to declare, Demosthenes were the greatest orator of the ancient world,—as the fond faith of Brougham, and other equally able, or more able critics, declare him to be the greatest secular orator of any age,—Hall was probably the greatest sacred orator of all time. He appears to have taken his place among the kings of oratory, not so much as the reward of one who, like Demosthenes, panted after and struggled to attain the Stephanos, or the crown; it descended upon him as a divine gift. Upon him, we know, while living, the loftiest scholars lavished their praise, and those who heard him, and were able to judge, thought that the audiences of Cicero or Bossuet, or even those mighty masters themselves, might have listened with astonishment and rapture to his eloquence. His biographer, Dr. Olynthus Gregory, somewhere speaks of his sermons as “dazzling miracles,” and this really seems to have been the impression he conveyed to many various orders of mind. His eloquence, though redundant, was not the less pure, but it seemed to bear along upon its stream the sublimest emanations of mind, resembling the noblest element of nature in grandeur, in beauty, and in energy. Men, after they had heard him, said that his words were like the light which fills the firmament, the tints which adorn the dew, and the rapid and irresistible flash which strikes and melts while it illumines. When he was thoroughly roused, it is said by Dr. William Matthews, his oratory was like an impetuous mountain

torrent in a still night, and the image appears to us from the traditions we have heard, from the lips of those who heard him, admirably appropriate and expressive.

The writer of these pages, in his essay on "Tongues of Fire," in "The Pulpit Ancient and Modern," gives an instance illustrative of the character of Mr. Hall's eloquence :—

"Well, then, take another instance," he says, "which may be spoken of as a pendant to that given by the author of the 'Horæ.' We remember to have heard a dear departed friend tell how, when a boy, he was taken by his father, one still summer evening, across the Northamptonshire fields—I believe it was to the little village town of Thrapstone—to hear Robert Hall. It was one of those old village chapels, with the square galleries. As in the instance of Chalmers, the place was crowded with plain farmer folk and a sprinkling of intelligent ministers and gentry from the neighbourhood. The minister came in, a simple, heavy, but still impressive-looking man, one whose presence compelled you to look at him. In due course he announced his text : 'The end of all things is at hand ; be sober and watch,' etc. Quite unlike Chalmers, his voice was not shattering, but thin and weak. There was no action at all, or only a kind of nervous twitching of the fingers ; more especially as the hand moved and rested upon the lower part of the back, where the speaker was suffering almost incessant pain. As he went on beneath the deepening evening shades falling through the windows of the old chapel, his voice first chained, then charmed and fasci-



nated his hearers one after another ; the whole place seemed as if beneath a great spell. As he talked about 'the end,' the spell upon the people seemed to begin to work itself out into an awful, fearful restlessness ; first one, then another, rose from his seat and stood stretching forward with a kind of fright and wonder. Still there was no action, only the following on of that thin voice, with a marvellous witchery of apt and melodious words, but through them 'the end of all things' sounded like some warning bell. More people rose, stretching forward. Many of those who rose first, as if they felt some strange power upon them, they knew not what, got up and stood upon their seats, until, when the great master ceased, closing his passionate and pathetic accents, the whole audience was upon its feet, intensely alive with interest, as if each one had heard in the distance the presages and preludes of the coming end, and felt that it was time to prepare. My friend used to speak of that never-forgotten moment, that summer evening in the old chapel, as one of the most memorable of his life. Thus we have spoken of the eloquence of Chalmers as a kind of *Trollhatten Fall* of words ; Hall's, on the other hand, was a kind of *Niagara* in its vast breadth and body, in its measured and nervous cadence. I am not in this saying which was the greater, only that the modes of their eloquence were so different, but, in each, fulfilling, it seems, to the utmost, the definition of Cicero, 'a continuous movement of the soul ;' certainly they were both of them *tongues of fire*. It cannot be too much to say that of such eloquence we have no living examples."

But that magnetic power which has shed such enchantment and wielded such a charm from the lips of greatest orators, causing immense multitudes to start from their seats in agitation, as in the case of Massillon and others, appears to have been an almost ordinary phenomenon when Hall soared, as Milton might have said, or would say, "with all his singing robes about him." Dr. Gregory speaks of the scenes he witnessed in almost the same language we have described above. He says, as Mr. Hall advanced, and increased in animation, five or six of the auditors would be seen to rise, and lean forward over the front of their pews, still keeping their eyes upon him. Some new or striking sentiment or expression would, in a few minutes, cause others to rise in like manner; shortly afterwards, still more; and so on, until, long before the close of the sermon, it often happened that a considerable portion of the congregation were seen standing, every eye fixed on the preacher, yet, now and then, for a moment, glancing from one to another, thus transmitting and reciprocating thought and feeling, and Mr. Hall, while manifestly absorbed in his subject, conscious of the whole, receiving new animation from what he witnessed, reflecting it back upon those who were already alive to the inspiration, until all that were susceptible of thought or emotion seemed wound up to the utmost limit of elevation on earth; then, as he closed, reluctantly and slowly the hearers resumed their seats.

In 1814, while preaching among his old friends at Cambridge, in the course of the sermon, but just before

he commenced the application, he uttered a very short but fervent ejaculatory prayer, during which the whole congregation rose from their seats; Mr. Hall seemed surprised for a moment, and but for a moment, and continued in prayer for above five minutes. He then resumed his sermon, and continued preaching for more than twenty minutes in such a strain of magnificent and overwhelming eloquence as the extraordinary incident might be expected to produce from powers and feelings like his, the whole congregation standing until the close of the sermon.

In 1812, when Mr. Hall was residing at Leicester, he paid one of his periodical visits to Bristol, and preached in Broadmead. He delivered a most solemn and impressive sermon on the text "dead in trespasses and sins." The concluding passages appear to have been remarkably sublime and awful; the moment he had delivered the last sentence, Dr. Ryland, then the pastor of the church, hastened part of the way up the pulpit stairs, and, while the tears trickled down his venerable face, exclaimed, with a vehemence which astonished both the preacher and congregation, "Let all that are alive in Jerusalem pray for the dead that they may live."

Oratory is a mystery, it is an inexplicable mystery. Again and again we compare it to the necromantic power of great and overwhelming singers: the wealth of expression in the tender tenor, the "loud uplifted trumpet" of the soprano; add the wizardry of voice to an equally subtle combination of mental powers, all

in happy harmony, rhythm, and symmetry, and we suppose we may form some conception of the orator; only that to us the most essential part of the orator dies when he dies. We may still retain his words, the close compacted chain-mail of his reasoning, and we may still retain his radiancy of imagination, and we may still retain the harmonious melody of expression; but, after all, these are only chords of a rare and exquisite instrument upon which the fingers can play no more. Hall's voice, indeed, appears to have been weak, disappointing, wanting in capacity, but it also appears to have carried his perceptions and emotions with electric force. We have heard other thin voices: "What a pity he had such a voice!" men have said of James Parsons and Joseph Sortain; but the voice, although it seemed almost noiseless, carried the flash and the bolt. But Hall's power was, as we have said, that the voice was only the vehicle for the union and concentration of the various faculties of the mind which made him so illustrious. We should usually be suspicious when adjectives are piled on adjectives, but really we can find nothing to object to one of Mr. Hall's critics who says: "He had pungency, clearness, brilliancy, comprehensiveness, energy, argumentative force, eloquence, simplicity, enchanting sweetness, devotional elevation, pathos and solemnity." But the greatest peculiarity appears to have been that this combination of qualities shone out in such perfect unity; like the bow of heaven, every colour was there and in harmony.

His name has been spoken of in alliance with that of Demosthenes. Now is this idle? is it merely a pedantic synonym? or has it a foundation in fact? We are quite certain that Mr. Hall was a far greater man than Demosthenes in the order of his mind, in his elevation of sentiment; and in his tastes and studies, he certainly much more nearly resembled Cicero,—most perfect of pagans, and nearest approximation to the Christian philosopher; but Cicero was much more of a rhetorician than Demosthenes, aimed more at producing superficial effect, and appears to have cared more about the posing of the body, and retaining an unrumpled and uncreased robe. On the other hand, we shall not degrade Mr. Hall's character to the level of the Billingsgate of Demosthenes. Shakespeare himself could not have been more ready in the manufacture of compound epithets. The abusive Greek deliciously draws out the venomous power, or rather, let us say, the abusive vehemence, of the Attic tongue; calls his adversary "a wretch, a reviler, a miscreant, a pompous declaimer, the offscouring and hack of the courts, a word spoiler, an execrable pedagogue." "Why, you wretch, do you bring your false accusations? Why do your fabricate your lying words? Why do you not purge away your filth?" Plenty of expressions falling from the lips of Hall assure us that he also would in like circumstances have been quite equal to the discharging of this verbal tempest of invective. His characterization of a reviewer who was guilty of tergiversation and false quotation reminds us of this: "Like a certain

animal in the eastern part of the world, which is reported to be extremely fond of climbing a tree for that purpose, he merely pelts the author with his own produce." When, upon his settlement at Cambridge, a Socinian gentleman said: "Ah, Mr. Hall, we shall soon have you amongst us, sir;" he replied: "*Me* among you sir! me among you sir! why then, sir, I should deserve to be tied to the tail of the great red dragon and whipped round to the nethermost regions of all eternity!" In his conversation we meet with many indications and hints of the power of even a fierce and fiery invective, but he appears to have reserved this power very much for the parlour; and yet, chastened and subdued by a sacred reverence, it no doubt does manifest itself occasionally even in the pulpit, as in that famous passage: "Eternal God, on what are Thine enemies intent! What are those enterprises of guilt and horror, that, for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of Heaven must not pierce! Miserable men! Proud of being the offspring of chance; in love with universal disorder; whose happiness is involved in the belief of there being no witness to their designs, and who are at ease only because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world."

But wherein, then, does Hall resemble Demosthenes? We venture to think that the words of David Hume concerning the great Grecian will apply exactly to the greatest discourses of our modern master. After remarking that his manner is more chaste and austere

than that of Cicero, Hume says of it: "Could it be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly: it is rapid harmony exactly adjusted to the sense; it is vehement reasoning without any appearance of art; it is disdain, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument; and of all human productions the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection." And it has been felt that the argumentative power in Hall is a most marked characteristic and attribute; his words are vehemently wielded so that they tell with overwhelming force, not merely because they are good and acceptable words, but because they are luminous; they do not so much set forth and display reasons in logical order, every word is logic on fire. Hence, Hall was a plain preacher, "the common people heard him gladly;" the greatest masters in the senate and at the bar, the greatest Churchmen and scholars thronged to hear him, but he felt an equal pleasure in preaching in the humblest villages round Cambridge or Leicester, and, while at Cambridge, usually preached three times on the Sabbath. In oratory most men have sought after what is beautiful, what is charmingly illustrative; Hall sought after what was strong, but in him, as in very few, strength and beauty were wedded; and if every sentence and every sermon were beautiful, every sentence and every sermon was plain. Hall never fell into the mistake which many preachers make,—and to one or two in our day we could point as illustrating the remark,—that to be plain a preacher must be coarse,

One of the critics of Demosthenes has remarked upon that great orator of the French Revolution, Mirabeau,—“He was an ugly creature, black shaggy head, seamed face, but when he shook his black head there was something in it. A friend told him once that he was ugly, and Mirabeau replied: ‘You do not understand all the power of my ugliness.’” And some have regarded ugliness as a very attribute of oratory. In Hall it was not so, grace was in all his speech, the grace of plainness and instantaneous and lightning-like conviction.

It is certain that the farther Mr. Hall advanced in life, the more closely he read and studied Demosthenes; it was said by some that he lost something of the excessive brilliancy of his early imagination; in fact, we suppose it to be more probable that his study of Demosthenes affected, so as to alter, the character of his imagination. Careless or sensational readers might, perhaps, speak of Demosthenes as deficient in the faculty; in truth, imagination enters into the very texture of the fibre of his speech, so that the images do not stand out, but are interlocked in the language and thus they became arguments. An able paper appeared many years since in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* on the interesting question, “Did Paul imitate the language of Demosthenes?” That Paul read and knew Demosthenes, we should suppose to be undoubted; that he imitated him, we should hold to be just as doubtful. The writer we have mentioned refers to many passages in the Epistles which have a character of Demosthenic reasoning; but it is singular that he does not refer



to the apostle's oration on Mars' hill; that is really an illustration of the style of which we have spoken, in which imagination is held in chain, and yet every sentence heaves and burns with it, and carries the weight of irresistible logic: that oration is a good illustration of what we mean by the style of both Demosthenes and Hall.

Wherein, then, again it may be inquired, does he resemble Demosthenes? In the wise use of the imagination. We take it that Hall's genius was, in the language of our poet, "of imagination all compact." Thus it is always with the highest and most pre-eminent forms of genius; in inferior minds and orders imagination is something appended and put on, what may be called the peacock's-tail order of eloquence, it is spread out in a very imposing and chromatic fashion, but perhaps only gives the impression of finery without force. It is remarked of the style of Demosthenes that his figures are plied into his speech, his metaphors are sometimes conveyed in a piercing and all-sufficient word; but whether he employ metaphor, or antithesis, or climax, or apostrophe, they are all so welded into the matter in hand that the hearer, nay, and the reader, is never permitted to forget the main business of the speaker, all bear on to the distinct end and object in the speaker's mind. Of course this does not preclude the employment of even the bold and distinct image, and of this department Hall was a great master; but in the noblest images there was a brevity which constituted an additional beauty, and enhanced and dignified the

argument. Thus, at the close of the vindication of Dr. Priestley, he nobly says: "Distinguished merit will ever rise superior to oppression, and will draw lustre from reproach. The vapours which gather round the rising sun, and follow it in its course, seldom fail at the close of it to form a magnificent theatre for its reception, and to invest with variegated tints, and with a softened effulgence, the luminary which they cannot hide."

But these constitute only the inferior departments, almost the machinery, through which the soul of the higher orator acts; and how rare is the appearance of the man whose genius is equal to the highest demands of power. All that we have said of Mr. Hall as an orator would leave still untouched and unacknowledged those most famous pieces on which his reputation when living, and his immortality now that he has passed from us, chiefly depend. Dr. Chalmers was eminently great while living; he no doubt filled a much larger sphere, and lived an incomparably more full and active life, than Hall. Their names are often associated together; we suppose they were regarded as the two most eminent pulpit masters of their day, and the crashing thunder of Chalmers' words, assisted by the peculiar northern accent which added so much power and effect in delivery, won for him everywhere great triumphs. He was a great man and a great preacher, and he filled by his presence many separate seats of power; but we have sometimes thought that the contrasted comparison between the two men might be singularly illustrated by

their separate sermons on the death of the Princess Charlotte. In the sermon of Chalmers there is scarcely a paragraph which has much reference to the circumstance which brought the congregation together; the discourse is mostly occupied by a discursive appeal for an increased provision for the ecclesiastical establishments of the country; the text itself does not speak very pertinently to the occasion: "For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Hall's text spoke immediately to the national grief: "She hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it is yet day." If we have found Hall's style in many principles corresponding to, and comparable with, that of Demosthenes, this is a poem in a sermon which brings him into most favourable comparison with the great French preachers, and contrasts especially with the splendid funeral orations of Bossuet. Bossuet is no favourite with the present writer, who takes the freedom to regard the style of those renowned pieces as eminently false in taste, gaudy, and meretricious; nothing of this appears in Mr. Hall's highly pathetic performance. Scarcely any piece of Hall's reminds us more of the apt image we quoted just now, that his eloquence was like an impetuous torrent in a still night. Or the successive paragraphs are like a mournful procession among the dark night mountains. It is an argument, all parts of the discourse are related, the night of nature is outspread in solemn gloom over the earth, but over the dark hills stars light up the darkness. Indeed, the sermon reminds the reader much more

of the solemn strains of Massillon than the glittering funereal splendours of Bossuet, only that it sprang from just one of those occasions in which the genius of Bossuet was supposed especially to shine, occasions in which he never forgot to recite the heraldry of the dead, and to place upon the coffin all the splendours of escutcheon, and hatchment, and sword, and coronet; nothing of this appears in this great sermon. It is a fine lyrical elegy, stately, ornate, and solemn, and we can hazard little in saying that it leaves, by its pathetic majesty, the French sermons, supposed to be the mightiest models in this order of composition, far behind; involuntarily, we always unite together the sermon of Hall with the mournfully majestic monument of Wyatt, in Windsor Chapel, which marks the spot where the beloved remains of the Princess lie. Tender memory, embalmed in some of Byron's sweetest and most hallowed lines, and by the chisel of most delicate and impressive sculpture. But Hall's sermon must certainly be read with adequate feelings while the English language shall retain its place and power;—it is a night piece on death! the “still sad music of humanity” relieved and lightened by the mysterious music from beyond the dark hills, bearing to the heart hopes full of immortality. And it is in this sermon that immortal passage occurs, which surely can never be read without producing a solemn vibration in the heart of the reader.

## THE OBSEQUIES OF A LOST SOUL.

“Eternity, it is surely not necessary to remind you, invests every state, whether of bliss or of suffering, with a mysterious and awful importance entirely its own, and is the only property in the creation which gives that weight and moment to whatever it attaches, compared to which, all sublunary joys and sorrows, all interests which know a period, fade into the most contemptible insignificance. In appreciating every other object, it is easy to exceed the proper estimate; and even of the distressing event which has so recently occurred, the feeling which many of us possess is probably adequate to the occasion. The nation has certainly not been wanting in the proper expression of its poignant regret at the sudden removal of this most lamented Princess, nor of their sympathy with the royal family, deprived by this visitation of its brightest ornament. Sorrow is painted in every countenance, the pursuits of business and of pleasure have been suspended, and the kingdom is covered with the signals of distress. But what, my brethren, if it be lawful to indulge such a thought, what would be the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Where shall we find the tears fit to be wept at such a spectacle? or, could we realize the calamity in all its extent, what tokens of commiseration and concern would be deemed equal to the occasion? Would it suffice for the sun to veil his light and the moon her brightness; to cover the ocean with mourning, and the heavens with sackcloth? or,

were the whole fabric of nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe ? ”

Sometimes in the pulpit we suppose the pathetic passions of the preacher reached to a height of all-subduing and most plaintive power. We apprehend that the passage we have just quoted was very frequently equalled in the utterances of the preacher ; his principles, his religious faith, permitted him to indulge in such sombre views ; he was an eminently suffering man ; the valleys of existence stretched all round him, and it could not but be that the sombreness in his own spirit sometimes gave, even notwithstanding the cheerful Christian faith, an outlook of despair ; but again, were ever words more melodious, was ever prospect more radiant than that which opens up in the closing words of the funeral sermon for Dr. Ryland ?

#### THE REUNION OF THE PIOUS DEAD.

“ If the mere conception of the reunion of good men, in a future state, infused a momentary rapture into the mind of Tully ; if an airy speculation, for there is reason to fear it had little hold on his convictions, could inspire him with such delight, what may we be expected to feel, who are assured of such an event by *the true sayings of God!* How should we rejoice in the prospect, the certainty rather, of spending a blissful eternity with those whom we loved on earth, of seeing them emerge from the ruins of the tomb, and the deeper ruins of the

fall, not only uninjured, but refined, and perfected, with every tear wiped from their eyes, standing before the throne of God and the Lamb, *in white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to God, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!* What delight will it afford to renew the sweet counsel we have taken together, to recount the toils of the combat, and the labour of the way, and to approach, not the house, but the throne of God, in company, in order to join in the symphonies of heavenly voices, and lose ourselves amidst the splendours and fruitions of the beatific vision !

“To that state all the pious on earth are tending; and if there is a law from whose operation none are exempt, which irresistibly conveys their bodies to darkness and to dust, there is another, not less certain or less powerful, which conducts their spirits to the abodes of bliss, to the bosom of their Father and their God. The wheels of nature are not made to roll backwards; everything presses on towards eternity; from the birth of time an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men towards that interminable ocean. Meanwhile heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and divine, leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and the slaves of concupiscence; while everything which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered and selected from the ruins of the world, to adorn that eternal

*city which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* Let us obey the voices that call us thither ; let us *seek the things that are above*, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. Let us follow in the track of those holy men, who, together with your beloved and faithful pastor, have taught us by their voice, and encouraged us by their example, *that, laying aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us, we may run with patience the race that is set before us.* While everything within us and around us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparations for another world, and earnestly implore that grace, which alone can put an end to that fatal war which our desires have too long waged with our destiny. When these move in the same directions, and that which the will of Heaven renders unavoidable shall become our choice, all things will be ours, life will be divested of its vanity, and death disarmed of its terrors. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness."*



About a hundred years before the birth and youth of Robert Hall, the pulpit of France, in the age of Louis XIV., was illuminated and adorned by the great French preachers whose appearance certainly creates an epoch not only in the history of the pulpit, but in the history of eloquence. Voltaire, in his gorgeous delineation of that age, has spoken of them as elevating the pulpit really to a place in the fine arts, and the greatest princes in this kingdom of sacred eloquence were unquestionably Bossuet, Massillon, and, perhaps, Bourdaloue. In the time of Hall's earliest efforts they, therefore, to educated minds, held nearly the same place in tradition which Hall holds in ours. We confess, with Dr. Gregory, remembering the chaste simplicity of the mind of Hall, to wonder at the excessive admiration he entertained for Bossuet. It is wonderful to find him speaking of the great French preacher's *Oraisons Funèbres* as "the first of mortal compositions, inferior only to those words unutterable which compose the songs of seraphs around the throne." And when one of his congregation said to him, "The impressive conclusion of your sermon this morning, sir, reminded me very much of Bossuet," he replied, "I am very sorry for it; there is no preacher of whom I should more reluctantly remind my congregation than Bossuet. I should come off most miserably in the comparison." No doubt many readers will greatly object to the regarding the pulpit and its achievements as having any place beneath the denomination of the fine arts. It is instantly conceded that very few of its performances, especially in later days, have any claim at all to such a

distinction. Yet such was the honour conferred on ancient classical eloquence, and the Christian orator ought to have claims especially distinguishing him, and separating him from, and lifting him above those of Greece and Rome ; whereas the spheres of law or politics were the only realms open to the ancient orator, Christianity created moral eloquence, and that tone of evangelical sadness which a French writer has described as being the soul of it. Robert Hall is the only English preacher for whom it can be claimed that his sermons, or great orations, belong to the region of the fine arts. His language usually combines the simplest terms and the loftiest ideas, the most common expressions and the most tremendous images. To him, nothing he introduces is obscure ; if he discusses the most abstruse metaphysics, or the most sublime theology, the clearness of his own thought has cleared his language, and, through the transparent waters of speech, the shining pearl is distinctly seen. Perhaps our prejudices arm our judgment against Bossuet ; in his greatest and most subduing passages the rhetorician and great actor appear to us too conspicuously. In his funeral oration for Henrietta, the Duchess of Orleans, who is said to have expired in his arms in the flower of her youth and beauty, he dissolved the whole court in tears : " Oh fatal night ! Oh night of horror ! when suddenly was heard, like a clap of thunder, the shocking sound, Madame is dying !—Madame is dead ! " The orator was compelled to stop after those words, the whole congregation sobbed audibly.

No such prejudices animate us as we call to mind and

attempt to realize the words of Massillon, the beautiful and saintly Bishop of Clermont. When he preached his celebrated sermon on the small number of the elect, a strange transport seized the audience, they rose involuntarily, and murmurs of fright and surprise disturbed the orator, adding to the pathos of his discourse, as he imagined the last hours of his hearers to have come, the heavens opening over their heads, and Jesus Christ appearing in judgment; and then the tremendous question, "Do you believe that of the numbers now in this church He would find ten righteous souls amongst us? Would He find a single one?" This passage has been said to be the boldest figure in pulpit eloquence ever employed; but we venture to think that even it must yield to that marvellous passage of Hall which we have just now quoted on the "Obsequies of a lost soul."

Mr. Hall's sermon on "Modern Infidelity" drew from Lord Brougham his Review entitled "Pulpit Eloquence," in which, after some pages devoted to the expression of surprise that the very peculiar advantages of the pulpit are turned to very little account, he introduces, as the highest models, the great French preachers of the age of Louis XIV., and evidently implied that the productions of Hall might be worthily and well placed beside those famous and renowned pieces. Our remarks, therefore, upon Hall's place in relation to these, his eminent predecessors, are exempted by so great an authority,—at once, himself, a masterly critic and distinguished orator,—from any appearance of impertinence. But, whatever may be the dignity of Mr. Hall's great ser-

mons as models, it is quite evident their composition is but a small portion of their praise ; their most astonishing attribute was their speed. There is something captivating in motion, in graceful motion ; and it has been said of Mr. Hall's eloquence, that his mind, like a vast machine, gradually acquired a velocity which not only called forth every power of his own soul into action, but had an irresistible influence upon more remote objects, and touched all the springs of feeling, and of action, in the bosoms of his hearers. Dr. Trestrail says : " With many opportunities of listening to some of the most distinguished statesmen and orators in the senate, at the bar, and in the pulpit, only one, James Parsons, could be justly placed in comparison with Robert Hall." We have heard James Parsons when at his best, and believe in one point the comparison is just—in the speed with which the words, like steeds of fire, pursued their way ; but the philosophic breadth, the grandeur, the logic on fire, were all wanting in James Parsons. Conceive Thomas Binney and James Parsons in one!—great thought and great feeling, speeding swiftly on, the mighty engine, the being all awake in its accelerated motion, shedding forth its words like flakes of fire, and an approximation may be made to the style of Hall. Lord Brougham, Lord Denman, and Samuel Rogers, the poet, went to hear him, and Brougham likened his oratory to the charming forensic eloquence of Lord Plunket ; but in Plunket, while we find the pathos and the speed, we miss, as in Parsons, that agitation, and tumult, and force of soul, those images

of terror and sublimity, those sudden strokes of power. In a word, Hall was Hall. It is vain to inquire to what happy accident it is owing that only one Demosthenes appeared in the ancient world, and as vain to inquire how it happens that, compared with Hall, all other of our sacred speakers seem good common-sense talkers, or speakers through whose thin veil of artificial rhetoric and clumsy climax the mechanical preparation may be too obviously and painfully seen.

It is of the nature of such minds as Hall's that from the clearness, the light-bearing strength and force of their own nature, they do not seem to be original thinkers, or original teachers. It is the mighty gift of the first-rate order of intelligences that they draw out our own nature, and set forth in the light of our own knowledge that which had been in us all along. Was Shakespeare an original thinker? His works are crowded with axioms, they read like truisms, the setting is so faultless, so perfect, and beyond the possibility of all improvement; and yet, while they delight us by freshness of setting, they do not seem to be new; it seems as if we had heard them long years since, and as if we were perfectly familiar with them. Very much is this the case with Hall. In his preaching he very often struck out golden sentences of unimprovable felicity; they very frequently passed away from his own memory. On one occasion an accomplished friend, a lady, a member of his Church at Leicester, was reading to him, at his own request, some notes she had ventured to take of some of his discourses; he interrupted her with, "Did I say

that, madam? I did not know I had ever said anything so fine!" His hearers used to lie in wait for these rich things, and they were never disappointed. Dare we use such an undignified frame of speech as common sense, and say that Mr. Hall's sermons and sentences are strongly characterized by it? Well, Demosthenes' oration for the crown teems with common sense; the pages of Shakespeare overflow with common sense; so, also, do the pages of our great modern German master, Goethe; and do not also the pages of Thomas Carlyle? But that does not prevent either, of the last three writers especially, from being eminently metaphysical. Mr. Hall derided metaphysics, and scarcely ever used an expression derived from the science; so, we will be bound to say, Shakespeare would have done. The studies of Hall, however, had been eminently metaphysical; his imagination was metaphysical rather than poetic, and the mould of his thoughts was strictly metaphysical; his reasoning was always popular in language, but philosophic in its structure.

Take the following as an illustration of philosophic thought in popular language:

#### MOTION A PROOF OF DEITY.

"We shall find it impossible to give any account of innumerable changes which are continually taking place in the visible world, without tracing them up to mind. There cannot be a clearer proof of a Deity, than the existence of motion. This evidently appears not to be essential to inatter, because we see a very great portion

of the material universe without it. Not being, therefore, an original state of matter, but merely an incident, it must be an effect. But since matter, not being intelligent, cannot be the cause of its own motion, and yet we cannot conceive of any atom beginning to move without a cause, that cause must be found out of itself. Whatever may be the nearest cause, or the number of secondary causes; though innumerable portions of matter may be reciprocally moved; though the series of links in the chain through which motion is propagated may be indefinitely multiplied; we must, in order to arrive at the origin of these various phenomena, ascend to *mind*, terminate our inquiries in *spirit*; nor can we account for the beginning, much less for the continuance and extension of motion, unless we trace it to the will of that Being, who is the Cause of all causes—the great original Mover in the universe. Power is, therefore, the attribute of mind; instrumentality that of body. When we read in the Old Testament of the most exalted achievements ascribed to angelic spirits, we cannot suppose that it is owing to any gross materialism which they possess; on the contrary, they have no bodies capable of being investigated by our senses; and, in proportion as they are attenuated, do they possess greater power. We have reason to believe that all finite minds are under the direction of the Supreme Power, who, without destroying their accountability or interfering with their free agency, makes all their operations subservient to the accomplishment of His counsels. Hence, all opposition to the Deity is beautifully repre-

sented by Isaiah, as if the instrument should rebel against him that wields it, as 'if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up,' or 'the staff should lift up itself against him that is no wood.' All created beings, in this respect, are but instruments in the hand of the Deity, whose will is sovereign over them.

"The Divine Being, as the great Father of spirits, combines within Himself all the separate energies found in the universe. He is the source, origin, and fountain of all power diffused through creation. The very minds which He has formed are kept in mysterious subordination, and can never overstep the bounds He has assigned them. 'Once have I heard this, that power belongs unto God.'"

And so also, again, the following is a fine piece of luminous and popular reasoning, assuredly upon the most infinitely impressive matter upon which the mind can exercise itself:

#### THE BEING OF GOD.

"His essence is altogether hidden from the most profound investigation, the most laborious research, the most subtle penetration of His creatures. With respect to this, it may be said, 'Who by searching can find out God; who can find out the Almighty to perfection?' We know that He possesses certain attributes (which we distinguish by certain names drawn from analogous excellencies among men), exclusive of all limit or imperfection found in human nature. We ascribe to Him every idea of virtue and spiritual beauty, exalted to spiritual



perfection. But how the Divine Being Himself exists in an essential and eternal nature of His own, without beginning as well as without end; how He can be present at the same moment in every point of illimitable space, without excluding any one of His creatures from the room it occupies; how, unseen, unfelt by all, He can maintain a pervading and intimate acquaintance and contact with all parts and portions of the universe; how He can be at once all eye, all ear, all presence, all energy, yet interfere with none of the perceptions and actions of His creatures: this is what equally baffles the mightiest and the meanest intellect; this is the great mystery of the universe, which is at once the most certain and the most incomprehensible of all things;—a truth at once enveloped in a flood of light and an abyss of darkness! Inexplicable itself, it explains all besides: it casts a clearness on every question, accounts for every phenomenon, solves every problem, illuminates every depth, and renders the whole mystery of existence as perfectly simple as it is otherwise perfectly unintelligible, while itself *alone* remains in impenetrable obscurity! After displacing every other difficulty, it remains the greatest of all, in solitary, unsurmountable, unapproachable grandeur! So truly clouds and darkness are round about Him. He maketh darkness His secret habitation; His pavilion to cover Him, thick clouds.

“His perfections are impressed on the works of nature; but in such a manner that we learn them only by inference. We ascend from effects to causes; from the

marks of contrivance and design, to the necessary existence of an Almighty Contriver. But what sort of Being He is, and what is the nature of His contact with His creatures, must, in the present state at least, remain an unfathomable mystery. We are utterly at a loss in all such speculations; yet this affords no diminution of the motives of piety. Our belief in the being of God is the belief of a profound mystery. The very idea of such a Being would appear incredible were it not that it is necessary, because the greatest absurdities would flow from supposing the contrary. Nothing can be accounted for unless we admit the existence of a causeless Cause—a presiding Governor of the universe. We are compelled therefore to choose the less difficulty of the two; or rather, to choose difficulty instead of impossibility, mystery instead of absurdity; and hence we repose on this grand truth.”

It has been very finely remarked by John Foster, in his essay on Mr. Hall as a preacher, that his earnest desire to be obvious in preaching, while his intellectual character and qualities bore him near to some point in that borderland of darkness, that awful darkness which encompasses us all around, prevented him in his public discourses, whatever excursions his own spirit might make in the study or in the course of conversation, from attempting to invade its majesty of darkness. Mr. Foster, whose admiration for him every page of his splendid essay displays, seems to think with many of Mr. Hall’s hearers that he did not make the most of his very great powers, and that, believing, for instance, in

the consciousness of the human soul in its separate sphere of being, and before its final lustration at the resurrection, he did not employ the mighty engine of his mind, as he might well have done, in carrying the accepted truth beyond the point where it seems to be really fixed and where it is assumed to be. Certainly he was well fitted to deal with those discussions which revolve about the great problem of metaphysical substance, or spiritual existence. Some idea of this may be derived from the following :

#### ON THE PERSONALITY OF SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE.

“Nor is it any just objection against the supposition in question, that these superior orders are not usually discernible by our Senses. The information derived from our senses, aided and corrected by reflection, is a sufficient guide in the practical concerns of life, but is a very uncertain criterion by which to determine the actual existence of things beyond a very narrow limit. Of those that are known to exist, some beings are so minute as to elude their notice, others so vast as to exceed their grasp. There are, probably, many material substances, whose subtlety exempts them entirely from that cognisance ; there are others which can only be perceived by the help of instruments.

“Whether there is in the universe any being purely spiritual, any perfectly detached from matter, except the Great Supreme, is a question, perhaps, not easy to solve, nor is the solution of it at all essential to our present inquiry. God is a spirit, and we cannot conceive of any

portion or modification of matter as entering into His essence, without being betrayed into contradiction and absurdity. In regard to every other class of being, it is, by many, conjectured that the thinking principle is united to some corporeal vehicle, through which it derives its perceptions, and by which it operates, while perfect spirituality, utterly separate from matter in any possible state, is the exclusive attribute of Deity. When angels are spoken of as spirits, this mode of expression may possibly denote no more than that the material vehicle with which they are united is of a nature highly subtle and refined, at a great remove from the flesh and blood which compose the bodily frame. Who will presume to set limits to the creative power in the organization of matter, or affirm that it is not, in the hand of its Author, susceptible of a refinement which shall completely exclude it from the notice of our senses? He who compares the subtlety and velocity of light with grosser substances which are found in the material system, will be reluctant to assign any bounds to the possible modifications of matter, much more to affirm there can be none beyond the comprehension of our corporeal organs.

“However probable the supposition of the existence of creatures of a nature more exalted than our own, nothing can be affirmed with certainty on the subject, beyond the dictates of revelation. In regard to a class of beings which are confessedly not objects of any of our senses, the evidence of their existence (if they exist at all) must be derived from divine testimony. Abstract

reasoning, however profound and accurate, presents nothing to the mind but the relations of its own ideas ; while for our knowledge of what exists without us, we are entirely indebted to observation and experiment. But neither observation nor experiment can extend to those departments of the universe that lie out of the reach of our senses. The province of philosophy, whether physical or mental, is to make an accurate survey of the mind and of matter, and to discover the laws to which they are subjected. To ascertain the laws of the material creation, the judicious inquirer not only diligently notices the appearances that present themselves, but puts the subject of his investigation into artificial situations, whence new appearances result ; this mode of inquiry is styled experimental. In mental philosophy, a different method must be adopted. Mind cannot, like matter, be divided, compounded, or decomposed, by subjecting it to the action of external agents, like matter ; and, consequently, there is here no room for experiment, properly so called. All that can be done, is carefully to observe the processes of thought and of emotion, and by attending to the operation of our mental faculties, to arrive at some general conclusions, the justice of which must, in every instance, be decided by individual consciousness.

“ This inconvenience, inseparable from all attempts to investigate the structure of the human mind, must, in my humble opinion, preclude the possibility of much original discovery, and will, probably, prevent metaphysics from ever obtaining the certainty and stability

of science. While investigating the laws of matter, we can vary the situations in which it is placed, as much as we please (within certain practical limits), and retain it as long under our view; but mental phenomena form a Proteus which is continually changing its aspect, and the objects of our observation are continually gliding away from us. Yet, while we acknowledge the incompetency of reason to ascertain the existence of a class of creatures superior to ourselves, and that all we can arrive at is a probable conjecture, it should be remembered that reason is equally incompetent to determine the contrary. If it is unable to build, it is, on the very same account, unable to destroy; whatever improvement philosophy may receive, however successful and brilliant its career, its conclusions, in no instance, apply to an economy which, being confessedly supernatural, is beyond its sphere, and governed by laws totally different from those which it is its business to explore.

“Were all the secrets of the material world laid open, and the whole structure of the human mind, with all the laws of thought, volition, and emotion, perfectly developed and explained, we should not be a step nearer the solution of the question under our present consideration, not at all more qualified to determine whether there be an order of superior intelligences, or what the station they occupied, or the faculties by which they were distinguished. In short, the utmost that philosophy can achieve is to make us acquainted with human creatures, and with some of the laws which govern the material and visible world. Whenever we ex-

tend our view beyond this, we have no *data* to proceed upon, [but] are all at once in the region of doubt and conjecture. It is a province to which the principles [of philosophy] cease to apply : ingenuity may amuse itself with endless suppositions, and fancy fill the void with splendid pictures ; but as to discovery, the intellect of a Newton is upon the same level with that of a child.

“ It follows from hence that the attempt to set aside the doctrine on this subject derived from Scripture, under the notion of its being *unphilosophical*, is puerile and unmeaning. The truth is, that it is in no other sense unphilosophical, except that philosophy has nothing to do with it, that it implies a supernatural economy, to which its principles are totally inapplicable, and which it can neither affirm nor deny. Here, if anywhere, we must have recourse ‘to the law and to the testimony ;’ if they speak not according to them, ‘there is no light in them.’ ”

But the orator ! in an eminent degree, THE ORATOR ! And we must turn back again to that attribute of Mr. Hall to which we intended especially to devote this chapter. How wide the difference is between the most admirable, useful, and instructive talking, and what is meant by oratory ! We suppose that even Mr. Hall varied at various times ; we believe that he was always an orator, just as an accomplished musician, with an adequate instrument beneath his fingers, always makes it speak ; but we should say that the genius of Mr. Hall was eminently capable of rising to great occasions ; and although never called to any of the great services

of the country in magnificent minsters, with the accompanying influences of mighty music and the imposing splendours of state, yet, relatively, to him occasions must have seemed imposing and impressive, the places of service, perhaps, not very large,—at the outside accommodating not more than a thousand or fifteen hundred people, but densely crowded, and frequently, perhaps, attended by many more representatives of high culture, learning, and social position than would ordinarily be found in more stately services ; thus, when the death of the Princess Charlotte, or the threatened invasion of England by France, or like great national occasions called for a great national utterance, no pulpit in the land gave forth such tones as that of Mr. Hall. His sermon on the threatened invasion has been called a grand war lyric : what impetuosity and speed, what a rapid march, and movement of overwhelming power, we find hinted in the following quotation ! It presents him to us as he was in his great heats of sublime but controlled passion ; we do not wonder that one—was it not Pitt?—said of it, “they were the finest words spoken since the days of Demosthenes :”—

#### THE APOSTROPHE TO THE VOLUNTEERS.

“From the most fixed principles of human nature, as well as from the examples of all history, we may be certain the conquest of this country, should it be permitted to take place, will not terminate in any ordinary catastrophe, in any much less calamitous than utter



extermination. Our present elevation will be the exact measure of our future depression, as it will measure the fears and jealousies of those who subdue us. While the smallest vestige remains of our former greatness, while any trace or memorial exists of our having been once a flourishing and independent empire, while the nation breathes, they will be afraid of its recovering its strength, and never think themselves secure of their conquest till our navy is consumed, our wealth dissipated, our commerce extinguished, every liberal institution abolished, our nobles extirpated; whatever in rank, character, and talents gives distinction in society, called out and destroyed, and the refuse which remains swept together into a putrefying heap by the besom of destruction. The enemy will not need to proclaim his triumph; it will be felt in the most expressive silence of extended desolation.

“Recollect for a moment his [Napoleon’s] invasion of Egypt, a country which had never given him the slightest provocation; a country so remote from the scene of his crimes, that it probably did not know there was such a man in existence (happy ignorance, could it have lasted!); but, while he was looking around him, like a vulture perched on an eminence, for objects on which he might gratify his insatiable thirst of rapine, he no sooner beheld the defenceless condition of that unhappy country, than he alighted upon it in a moment. In vain did it struggle, flap its wings, and rend the air with its shrieks! the cruel enemy, deaf to its cries, had infixed his talons, and was busy in sucking its blood,

when the interference of a superior power forced him to relinquish his prey, and betake himself to flight. Will that vulture, think you, ever forget his disappointment on that occasion, or the numerous wounds, blows, and concussions he received in a ten years' struggle? It is impossible. It were folly to expect it. He meditates, no doubt, the deepest revenge. He who saw nothing in the simple manners and blood-bought liberties of the Swiss to engage his forbearance, nothing in proclaiming himself a Mahometan to revolt his conscience, nothing in the condition of defenceless prisoners to excite his pity, nor in that of the companions of his warfare, sick and wounded in a foreign land, to prevent him from despatching them by poison, will treat in a manner worthy of the impiety and inhumanity of his character, a nation which he naturally dislikes as being free, dreads as the rival of his power, and abhors as the author of his disgrace.

"Though these are undoubted truths, and ought to be seriously considered, yet I would rather choose to appeal to sentiments more elevated than such topics can inspire. To form an adequate idea of the duties of this crisis, it will be necessary to raise your minds to a level with your station, to extend your views to a distant futurity, and to consequences the most certain, though most remote. By a series of criminal enterprises, by the successes of guilty ambition, the liberties of Europe have been gradually extinguished: the subjugation of Holland, Switzerland, and the free towns of Germany, has completed that catastrophe; and we are

the only people in the Eastern hemisphere, who are in the possession of equal laws and a free constitution. Freedom, driven from every spot on the continent, has sought an asylum in a country which she always chose for her favourite abode : but she is pursued even here, and threatened with destruction. The inundation of lawless power, after covering the whole earth, threatens to follow us here ; and we are most exactly, most critically placed, in the only aperture where it can be successfully repelled, in the Thermopylæ of the universe. As far as the interests of freedom are concerned, the most important by far of sublunary interests, you, my countrymen, stand in the capacity of the federal representatives of the human race ; for with you it is to determine (under God) in what condition the latest posterity shall be born : their fortunes are entrusted to your care, and on your conduct at this moment depends the colour and complexion of their destiny. If liberty, after being extinguished on the continent, is suffered to expire here, whence is it ever to emerge in the midst of that thick night that will invest it ? It remains with you then to decide whether that freedom, at whose voice the kingdoms of Europe awoke from the sleep of ages, to run a career of virtuous emulation in everything great and good ; the freedom which dispelled the mists of superstition, and invited the nations to behold their God ; whose magic touch kindled the rays of genius, the enthusiasm of poetry, and the flame of eloquence ; the freedom which poured into our lap opulence and arts, and embellished life with innumerable institutions

and improvements, till it became a theatre of wonders ; it is for you to decide whether this freedom shall yet survive, or be covered with a funeral pall, and wrapt in eternal gloom. It is not necessary to await your determination. In the solicitude you feel to prove yourselves worthy of such a trust, every thought of what is afflicting in warfare, every apprehension of danger must vanish, and you are impatient to mingle in the battle of the civilized world.

“Go then, ye defenders of your country, accompanied with every auspicious omen ; advance with alacrity into the field, where God Himself musters the hosts to war. Religion is too much interested in your success, not to lend you her aid ; she will shed over this enterprise her selectest influence. While you are engaged in the field, many will repair to the closet, many to the sanctuary ; the faithful of every name will employ that prayer which has power with God ; the feeble hands which are unequal to any other weapon, will grasp the sword of the Spirit ; and from myriads of humble, contrite hearts, the voice of intercession, supplication and weeping, will mingle in its ascent to heaven with the shouts of battle and the shock of arms !

“While you have everything to fear from the success of the enemy, you have every means of preventing that success, so that it is next to impossible for victory not to crown your exertions. The extent of your resources, under God, is equal to the justice of your cause. But should Providence determine otherwise, should you fall in this struggle, should the nation fall, you will have the

satisfaction—the purest allotted to man—of having performed your part ; your names will be enrolled with the most illustrious dead, while posterity, to the end of time, as often as they revolve the events of this period—and they will incessantly revolve them—will turn to you a reverential eye, while they mourn over the freedom which is entombed in your sepulchre. I cannot but imagine that virtuous heroes, legislators, and patriots, of every age and country, are bending from their elevated seats to witness this contest, as if they were incapable, till it be brought to a favourable issue, of enjoying their eternal repose. Enjoy that repose, illustrious immortals ! Your mantle fell when you ascended ; and thousands inflamed with your spirits, and impatient to tread in your steps, are ready *to swear by Him that sitteth upon the throne, and liveth for ever and ever*, they will protect freedom in her last asylum, and never desert that cause which you sustained by your labours, and cemented with your blood. And Thou, sole Ruler among the children of men, to whom the shields of the earth belong, *gird on Thy sword, Thou most mighty* : go forth with our hosts in the day of battle ! Impart, in addition to their hereditary valour, that confidence of success which springs from Thy presence ! Pour into their hearts the spirit of departed heroes ! Inspire them with Thine own ; and, while led by Thine hand, and fighting under Thy banners, open Thou their eyes to behold in every valley, and in every plain, what the prophet beheld by the same illumination—chariots of fire, and horses of fire ! ‘ *Then shall the strong man be as tow, and the maker of it as a*

*spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.'*"

Our readers will remember that, at the time these words were pronounced, the entire country might be said to be waiting breathless with anxiety. About this time it was that Napoleon struck the famous medal, "London taken, 1804." His armies were spread all along the Heights of Boulogne, waiting for the fleet which was to land them on our shores. The whole circumstances were more like those of the launching of the Spanish Armada than any which have occurred in our history. We have still some critics who say they are sorry to find Mr. Hall's piety, genius, and eloquence enlisted on the side of war. Such criticism is very idle. Mr. Hall in his grand and impassioned language exactly describes our situation at that moment: "We were most exactly placed in the Thermopylæ of the universe." Ours was the only unconquered piece of territory worth conquering in Europe; it was, perhaps, the last great gasp of patriotism our country ever felt; another such occasion has never occurred, we pray that it never may! The words we have just quoted are the grand battle song in which Hall adjured the English hosts to go forth for their country, and its freedom, in the name of the Lord of hosts. When Pitt—the great minister—pronounced that high eulogium upon the peroration, he was very likely thinking of those words of Demosthenes,—the entire passage is too long for quotation: "But it is not true, men of Athens, that you have done wrong in fighting the battle of all Greece for her free-

dom and salvation. No ! by your forefathers who for that cause rushed upon destruction at Marathon, and by those who stood in battle array at Platea, and by those who fought on the sea at Salamis, and by the warriors of Artemisium, and by all the others who now repose in the sepulchre of the nation—gallant men, to all of whom the state decreed a public funeral, deeming that they too had earned such honours, not merely from those who had combated fortunately and had come off victoriously and justly ; for the duty of the brave has been done by all.

Among the many delineations of the manner and power of Mr. Hall in the pulpit, we have always regarded the following as a graphic and interesting sketch :—

“The services preliminary to the sermon had been nearly gone through, and the last verse of a hymn was being sung, when Mr. Hall ascended slowly, and, I thought, wearily, the pulpit stairs. No one looking at his somewhat unwieldy and rather ungraceful figure, would have been prepossessed in his favour ; and, as he sat down in the pulpit, and looked languidly round on the congregation, I experienced, I know not why, a feeling of disappointment.

“He rose, and read his text : ‘The Father of lights.’ At first, his voice was scarcely audible, and there appeared some slight hesitation ; but this soon wore off ; and as he warmed with his subject, he poured forth such a continuous stream of eloquence, that it seemed as if it flowed from some inexhaustible source. His tones were, although low, beautifully modulated ; but, owing

to some affection in his throat, his speech was, at short intervals, interrupted by a short spasmodic cough.

“During the delivery of his brilliant paragraphs, the most breathless silence reigned throughout the vast assemblage ; but his momentary cessation was the signal for general relaxation from an attention so intense that it became almost painful. It was curious to observe how every neck was stretched out, so that not a word which fell from those eloquent lips should be lost ; and the suspended breathings of those around me evinced how intently all were hanging on his charmed words.

“Mr. Hall’s fluency was wonderful, and his command of language unsurpassed. I will not mar the beauty of his discourse, by attempting to describe it ; but, as I followed him, whilst, by his vivid imagination, he conveyed his hearers through the starry skies, and reasoned, from those lights of the universe, what the Father of lights must be, I became lost in wonder and admiration.

“But the crowning glory of his sermon was his allusion to the heavenly world, whose beatific glories he expatiated on, with almost the eloquence of an angel. He seemed like one inspired ; and, as he guided us by living streams, and led us over the celestial fields, he seemed carried away by his subject, and his face beamed as if it reflected heaven’s own light. And this was the man who, but an hour before, had lain down on the ground, in the excess of his agony ; and who, from his earliest years, had *constantly* endured the most excruciating torture which man can be called upon to bear !



I have myself heard him say that he had never known one waking hour free from extreme pain.

“Mr. Hall used very little action in the pulpit. His favourite—or, rather, his usual—attitude, was, to stand, and lean his chest against the cushion; his left arm lying on the Bible, and his right hand slightly raised, with the palm towards the audience. His tones were almost uniformly low; and he rarely raised them. Ideas seemed so to accumulate whilst he was preaching, that they flowed forth without effort on his part. Never did he hesitate, and, so pure were his oral compositions, that the most elaborate efforts of the pen would rather have injured than improved their structure.”

It is singular, and interesting from its singularity, to contemplate such a character as that of Robert Hall; he sometimes almost irritates us by his utter, his perfect and entire obliviousness to all ambition. It is well known that he looked with no complacency upon any single piece of work he ever performed. The oration from which we quoted, on the expected crisis of invasion, was preached in Bristol. Of course there were ardent requests for its publication. As was the case with most of his published sermons, he had to write it out from memory, and some weeks elapsed before its publication. One edition was immediately sold, and another demanded. He expressed his surprise, his amazement that any person should desire to possess it; and in the second edition, referring to some inaccuracies of the press, he says, he “was desirous ere it descended to that oblivion which is the natural exit of such pub-

lications, of presenting it for once in an amended form, that it may be at least decently interred." How amazing to think that a man who could entertain so lowly an opinion of himself, should be able in public to sustain a flight so self-possessed and majestic. It was not so much, however, that he either doubted or did not know himself, but that he pitched the standard of excellence so high. He no doubt also formed a true conception of pulpit oratory in general. A friend one day expressed surprise that he should engage himself to preach in ordinary and lowly villages, to persons who he conceived could scarcely understand him. He replied quickly : "You are very greatly mistaken, sir ; poor and illiterate people can always understand a better style than they are able to command ; and I am quite satisfied the villagers very well comprehend my preaching." And at another time he remarked that, "as language is a mere vehicle of thought, so the test of a good style was its perfect transparency, it would be like the purest water free from every extraneous mixture." How true it is of his own style, that there was seldom a word to spare, or one that could with advantage be exchanged. And alas ! what a prophecy that was he uttered, and how it has been fulfilled : "I am afraid that a vicious taste is gaining ground, both among preachers and hearers, all glare and paint, little to the understanding and nothing to the heart." He could indulge in sarcasm and pointed rebuke in the pulpit, however ; it would seem that even Robert Hall sometimes had sleepy hearers, and we meet with a passage in which

he addresses them in a fine style: "The practice of sleeping in places of worship, a practice we believe not prevalent in any other place of public resort, is not only a gross violation of the advice we are giving, to hear the word with attention, but most distressing to ministers, and most disgraceful to those who indulge it. If the apostle indignantly inquires of the Corinthians if they had not houses to eat and drink in? may we not ask those who indulge in this practice whether they have not beds to sleep in that they convert the house of God into a dormitory? A little self-denial, a very gentle restraint on the appetite, would in most cases put a stop to this abomination. And with what propriety can he pretend to desire the sincere milk of the word, who cannot be prevailed upon one day out of seven to refrain from the gluttony, which absolutely disqualifies him for receiving it?"

Indeed it seems to us, from whatever point of view we regard this extraordinary man as a preacher, his greatness shines conspicuously all round; equal he seems to all audiences, and to all occasions, but, as we have said, with an almost provoking unconsciousness that there was anything remarkable about him; and yet most hearty and affectionately cheerful in his admiration of others, if only reality and earnest and ingenuous truthfulness shone through the discourse. In the neighbourhood of Bristol he went out to preach with his friend, John Leifchild. He was delighted with Leifchild's sermon; but when some one began to applaud his own discourse, and to depreciate Leifchild's, he indignantly

replied, that "his own discourse was, in comparison, so inferior that contempt itself could not sink low enough to reach it." There can be little doubt, however, that Mr. Hall attenuated, or compacted and dignified, his style to suit his audiences. He would scarcely address to illiterate villagers such language as the following :—

ON CHRISTIANITY IN RELATION TO THE NATURE OF  
MAN.

"Christianity was subsequent to the existence and creation of man. It is an institution intended to improve and ennoble our nature, not by subverting its constitution or its powers, but by giving us a more enlarged view of the designs of Providence, and opening a prospect into eternity. As the existence of man is not to be *dated* from the publication of Christianity, so neither is that order of things that flows from his relation to the present world altered or impaired by that divine system of religion. Man, under the Christian dispensation, is not a new structure erected on the ruin of the former; he may rather be compared to an ancient fabric, restored, when it had fallen into decay, and beautified afresh by the hand of its original founder. Since Christianity has made its appearance in the world, he has continued the same kind of being he was before, fills the same scale in the order of existence, and is distinguished by the same propensities and powers.

"In short, Christianity is not a reorganization of the principles of man, but an institution for his improvement. Hence it follows, that whatever rights are

founded on the constitution of human nature, cannot be diminished or impaired by the introduction of revealed religion, which occupies itself entirely on the interests of a future world, and takes no share in the concerns of the present in any other light than as it is a state of preparation and trial. Christianity is a discovery of a future life, and acquaints us with the means by which its happiness may be secured; civil government is altogether an affair of the present state, and is no more than a provision of human skill, designed to ensure freedom and tranquillity during our continuance on the temporary stage of existence. Between institutions so different in their nature and their object, it is plain no real opposition can subsist; and if ever they are represented in this light, or held inconsistent with each other, it must proceed from an ignorance of their respective genius and functions. Our relation to this world demands the existence of civil government; our relation to a future renders us dependent on the aid of the Christian institution; so that, in reality, there is no kind of contrariety between them, but each may continue without interference in its full operation."

So also we have the following fine passage :

#### THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SOLDIER :

#### THE ART OF HEALING CONTRASTED WITH THE ART OF WAR.

"A large portion of the ingenuity and industry of mankind is incessantly exerted in multiplying the plea-

asures of the opulent, giving a higher zest to the fruitions of luxury, and gratifying the caprices of vanity and pride ; and such is the mechanism of society, that even from these the poor are fed and the indigent relieved. With the physician, however, it is far otherwise. He interposes in the moment of exigence, and obeys the call of distress. He administers the cordial to the fainting spirit, rekindles the expiring lamp of hope, and (often) decks the countenance with smiles, which death, under the ravages of disease, had marked for his victim and covered with his shade. He leaves it for others to accompany the human race in their revelry and their triumphs ; while they bask on the bosom of the ocean, or spread their sails to the wind, he presents himself on the shore, and rescues the shipwrecked mariners from the waves. With a silent and invisible energy he contends with the powers of destruction, and often rescues from the grave him that (seemed) ‘appointed to death.’

“If he conduct the objects of his care sometimes through painful processes, his proceeding resembles, in that respect, the conduct of the gracious Author of our being, who afflicts with paternal reluctance, and smites but to heal. From the practice of an enlightened professor of the healing art, nothing is more remote than the infliction of unnecessary suffering, or wanton and unfeeling experiments on the powers of human endurance. His hand never administers an uneasy sensation, but with a view to the future comfort of his patient ; nor is he the author of a single privation or restraint but what is designed for his good.

“How striking is the contrast betwixt the art of medicine and the art of war! The last has for its object the destruction, the first, the preservation, of the species. The mind of the warrior teems with machinations of ruin, and anxiously revolves, among different schemes that present themselves, which shall scatter destruction to the widest extent and with the surest aim: his progress is marked by devastation and blood, by depopulated fields and smoking villages, and the laurels which he wears are bedewed with the tears of widows and orphans. The acclamations which he wins from one portion of his species are answered by the execrations and curses of another; and the delusive splendour, the proud and imposing array, with which he contrives to gild the horrors of his profession, are but the pomp and retinue of the king of terrors. The art of healing proceeds, with a silence and secrecy like the great processes of nature, to scatter blessings on all within its reach; and the couch of sickness, the silent retreat of sorrow and despair, are the scene of its triumphs.

“The little applause which is bestowed on physicians, compared with what is so lavishly heaped on conquerors, conveys a bitter reflection on human nature, by showing how much we suffer ourselves to be the dupes of our senses, to extol the brilliant rather than the useful: whereas, a just and impartial estimate would compel us to assign to skilful practitioners of medicine the very first rank among merely human professions. For when we consider the variety of ills to which we are exposed, and how large a portion is derived from bodily infir-

mities, it will appear that we are more indebted to their assistance than to that of any other class of persons whatever."

And with one last beautiful extract we will close these illustrations of Mr. Hall as an orator :

LIFE HERE REGARDED AS THE FULFILLING OF A  
COURSE.

"The life of every individual may be compared to a river : rising in obscurity, increasing by the accession of tributary streams, and, after flowing through a longer or shorter distance, losing itself in some common receptacle. The lives of individuals also, like the course of rivers, may be more or less extensive, but will all vanish and disappear in the gulf of eternity. Whilst a stream is confined within its banks, it fertilizes, enriches, and improves, the country through which it passes ; but if it desert its channel, it becomes injurious and destructive, a sort of public nuisance, and, by stagnating in lakes and marshes, its exhalations diffuse pestilence and disease around. Some glide away in obscurity and insignificance ; whilst others become celebrated, traverse continents, give names to countries, and assign the boundaries of empires. Some are tranquil and gentle in their course ; whilst others, rushing in torrents, dashing over precipices, and tumbling in waterfalls, become objects of terror and dismay. But, however diversified their character, or their direction, all agree in having their course short, limited, and determined : soon they fall into one capacious recep-



tacle ; their waters eventually mix in the waves of the ocean. Thus human characters, however various, have one common destiny ; their course of action may be greatly diversified, but they all lose themselves in the ocean of eternity."

We shall not stay now to answer the question often put, whether it be desirable that we should see a race of preachers of the order of Robert Hall ; it is enough to say that we are in no danger of succumbing to such a calamity. The question, however, implies forgetfulness of the fact that he was not less a useful than an accomplished and majestic preacher. His ordinary sermons might be heard or read with advantage by the humblest intelligences ; but he illustrated, and still illustrates, that the office of the Christian teacher is compatible with the highest cultivation, and the largest and most gifted opulence of the human mind. He bowed before the majesty of his powers the most exalted men of his time who heard him, and, perhaps, by his mingled enchantments of logic and eloquence, hushed captious and thoughtless scepticism ; but after every eulogy, no sermon, even of Robert Hall's, was equal to his own personal character, and the majesty and dignity of his greatest words were not equal to his brave endurance of sharpest suffering, the sublime faith which sustained him through severest trials, and the extraordinary unconsciousness which, while acclamations on every hand acknowledged him as the prince of preachers, led him to regard himself as one of the most ordinary children of men.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *BRISTOL.*

IT is singular that Mr. Hall returned, in the last stage of his pilgrimage, as a pastor to the town, and to the Church, from whence he first set out nearly forty years before. In 1825 the minister of Broadmead, the eminent Dr. Ryland, was called to his rest. We have seen that Mr. Hall preached his funeral sermon, which is certainly among the most beautiful and elevated of his published discourses. He was invited to succeed him. What circumstances led to his acceptance of the invitation we do not know; he was apparently very happy in Leicester, and he took several months to decide. The parting appears to have been, alike for pastor and people, a very severe struggle. At last he determined to leave, and he entered upon the renewed pastorate in April, 1826. He appears always to have turned affectionately to Bristol: it was the scene of his early boyish, student life—old pains and sorrows give to the scenery of memory enchantment not less attractive to the heart than old pleasures; it was the place of his first sermons; there, returning from Aberdeen, he received the first expressions of public popularity;

there he put on the armour of the ministry ; there he was to lay it aside. He was now sixty-two years of age, and there remained yet five years of ministry before him. His powers were still in their majesty, although it is usually supposed that his preaching had not the imaginative brilliancy of his earlier years ; and this does somewhat interfere with our sense of the perfect knowledge of Mr. Foster in his estimate of his character as a preacher. William Jay implies this when he says : “ I have one advantage which Mr. Foster had not, viz., an early, as well as a late, acquaintance with him, so that I can view him comparatively in different periods of his history. His preaching, when I first knew him, was certainly intellectually greater and more splendid than it was for many years before his death. His earlier sermons, considered only as the productions of genius, rose above any I heard from him for years afterwards. This, however, was not the effect of any declension of ability,—and therefore he occasionally still brought forth a discourse far above the level of his usual performances, as if to show that he had not become unequal to his former doings,—but from more pious considerations and a growing wish to accommodate himself to the common apprehension, and to general usefulness.”

It was, we suppose, during his residence in Bristol, in the course of his second pastorate, that Robert Hall and John Foster became more especially known to each other. The two men, ‘Intellectual Incas’ of their race as they have been called, dwelt habitually on the loftiest table-lands of thought, but, as minds, they stand in

perfect contrast to each other. Foster was no orator, and the orator dies ; and it may be, that in after years and future generations, men will have their keenest sense of admiration awakened, and their most regretful wonder excited as to the eloquence of Hall, by the essay on his character as a preacher from the pen of Foster. There were perhaps some traits in Foster's genius which made it impossible to him to do the most ample justice to his friend who yet received so mighty a tribute of his admiration. Hall has left few things behind him so calculated to stir the sense of power as Foster has done ; but even of Foster we should have possessed but a partial and altogether inadequate knowledge had there not been given to us those extraordinary passages from his Journal, his Life, and his Letters. We often recur to what Wordsworth, the poet, once said to us, while we were handling, in his library at Rydal, a volume of the works of Johnson,—that the works of Johnson were interesting to him from Boswell's life. Foster's essays are most interesting, now, as a kind of appendix to his extraordinary Life, Letters, and Journal. Hall's mind raced onward like an ample, rich, rejoicing river, bearing in its course freshness and irrigation ; Foster's mind has been likened to the Black Sea in commotion,—we would say a dark inland mountain-lake, to observe which travellers must be content patiently and laboriously to climb : or Hall's mind was like a rich and royal garden appendant to a magnificent palace ; Foster's like a stern wild mountainous forest, in which the traveller would be not unlikely to find the

haunts and retreats of banditti. The style of Foster has been likened to the Laocoon, writhing in the coil of the serpent; Hall's has been likened to the Apollo Belvedere,

"The Lord of the unerring bow,  
The God of life and poetry and light."

Foster attracts by the grand irregular images of suggestive thought; Hall by the charming combination, and the orderly procession of all his powers: Foster reminds us most of Michael Angelo; Hall of Raphael: Foster's works resemble the abrupt flashes of lightning speedily swallowed in surrounding gloom; Hall's reflect to us more of the diffused influence of cheerful and abiding light.

We have never met with a more characteristic account of that extraordinary essayist, Mr. Hall's great friend, John Foster, than that given in the little volume of Dr. Trestrail. The instance was well known to us before. Allusions to it occur in the Life of Dr. Leifchild, although, perhaps, it was never so graphically and humorously given as to Dr. Trestrail from the lips of the Rev. Jacob Stanley. Mr. Stanley said: "I remember one occasion particularly, when, walking quietly along on a fine Sabbath morning, I overtook a large uncouth-looking man, and, having said good-morning, I asked him: 'Are you going to some place of worship?'

"Of course I be. I am going to Downend, where I do hear John Voster; for I am a member of his Church.'

"Indeed, my friend, I am glad to hear you say that. You enjoy a very great privilege in hearing so remarkable and instructive a preacher.'

“ ‘Do ’ee think so? Everybody almost says he is a wonderful man; but, somehow, it doan’t seem so to me, for sometimes I can’t make un out at all. Why, now, there’s the last Sunday that ever wor. He came late,—though that doan’t often happen, for he keeps well to time; but as he wor a-comin’ along, a storm of wind and rain stopt un, and he tould us he took shelter under a big tree. And while he was a-waiting for the storm to blow off, he fell *a-musing*, he said. I didn’t understan’ un at first, but I soon made un out; for he told us that he began to think how long that tree had been a-grow-ing; whether it got there by accident, or was planted by somebody; and, if so planted, what sort of a man that planted un wor; whether he wor a good man or a bad man; where he was now, and what he wor a-doing. And, sir, them last words *did* strike me amazin’. And then he said he wondered how many people had lived and died, how many battles had been fought, how many kings set up and pulled down sin’ that tree had been a-grow-ing, and what it would all come to. Why, sir, he could have gone on till now in that way if he had a mind to. But now, sir, what is there in all that to show a poor sinner the way to heaven?’ ”

“ ‘Well, my friend, whatever answer may be given to your question, one thing is quite certain—that sermon made a very deep impression on you. If I were to go among my people, and ask them about the services of last Sunday, very few, I fear, could even remember the texts, still fewer the subjects of the sermons. But see how this sermon has fastened on you, and how it has

interested you and made you think. It did *you* good anyhow.'

" 'That's a fact, and ain't it curious? Why, I have hardly thought of anything else. I can't get it out of my head if I try. I suppose, sir, it *was* zummut extra-ordinar'.' "

"The reader," says Dr. Trestrail, "will be, perhaps, as much interested in reading this account as I was in hearing it from Mr. Stanley's lips. I have often thought that we have here the *germ*, so to speak, of that essay which many of Mr. Foster's ardent and discriminating admirers maintain to be the best and most characteristic production of his pen—*The Introduction to Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*."

Manifestly our space precludes the possibility of dwelling at any length upon Mr. Hall's later Bristol days. Certainly one of the most significant circumstances was that to which we have alluded—his acquaintance with John Foster. The pulpits of Bristol were at that time all admirably filled by men of considerable strength, if not of genius. There was Thomas Roberts at King Street, William Thorpe at Castle Green, and John Leifchild at Bridge Street. Thomas Crisp was at the Baptist Academy. But Hall's more intimate friend in the ministry we suppose to have been John Leifchild. Leifchild very well realized his inferiority to his great friend, but it did not at all disturb his devotion to his own field of usefulness. Ministers, it seems to us, lived then on better, more amicable and friendly terms, than, perhaps, they do now. Hall and Leifchild, both popu-

lar men, often took part in services in the country ; and the life of Leifchild furnishes several pleasant incidents creditable at once to the friendliness and to the modesty of both of these excellent men, and which, if these pages permitted, might be quoted and incorporated. Perhaps, even yet, in the following chapter, we may find space for one or two ; but the pages press, and we must hasten to the end. The pastorate at Bristol was bright but brief.

The dying days and hours of this great man brought out into remarkable light the Christian graces of his character and deportment. His last sermons were preached to his congregation in Broadmead in January, 1831 ; and it was noticed, as the prognostic of some important change, that, while reading, he found unusual difficulty in pronouncing two or three syllables, or giving them their proper sound ; and, a few days after, the same difficulty occurred in conversation. On the 9th of February, he attended a meeting of the Church, and this was the last occasion upon which he appeared in public. His concluding prayer is spoken of as singularly spiritual and elevated, and appeared to diffuse a heavenly influence on all around him. After the meeting, he retired to his home. He never met the people of his charge any more, and nothing now remained for him on earth but to suffer and to die. On the next day, February 10th, he was seized with a severe paroxysm while preparing for the ordinary evening service, when he should have preached a sermon preparatory to the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. On the following Sabbath, for some time he sustained



and fought with his sufferings alone. He attempted to go downstairs to the parlour, but was unable to proceed, and must have sat upon the stairs half an hour before any of his family discovered his situation or his sufferings. From this time most of the remaining hours of life were passed in incessant agony; and yet, through all, the composure of his mind appears to have been undeviating. From the time when he had been discovered on the stairs, in his attempt to stagger into the parlour, a bed had been prepared for him there. He did not go upstairs again. This was the room in which the closing scene, in a few days, was to take place. The splendours of genius now, for all the remaining hours, were elevated and softened into the sublime lights of resignation and devotion. In the midst of the sharp, protracted, and most intense pain not a word of murmuring or repining escaped from the lips of the sufferer, and the faith whose doctrines he had adorned by such persuasive eloquence through so many years in the pulpit, sustained him through those unutterably trying hours. He appeared to be constantly attempting to strengthen himself by turning his thoughts and his expressions towards the sufferings of Christ. During one night, when the attacks were a little mitigated, he spoke in lively terms of gratitude; and it is noteworthy, as we have already said, that he repeated with much unction the famous hymn of that Robert Robinson who had been his predecessor at Cambridge:

“Come, Thou Fount of every blessing!”

Shortly after this, the paroxysms of agony came on

again, and it was in one of these that he uttered the words to which we referred in the opening pages of this volume, and which the late Lord Lytton quotes as giving such strength to the old captain, Roland Caxton : "Why should a living man complain? I have not complained, have I, sir?" Perhaps, from some points of view, it appears humbling to contemplate the imperial master, who had swayed before his genius the passions of so many audiences, lying there with all his robes of majesty laid aside, and Cicero and Demosthenes, and all the great minds with which he had held familiar intercourse, no longer of any account. But such a thought is instantly reprov'd by the finer spectacle of the manner in which a simple and unfaltering trust was sustained through the narrow avenues and dark shadows of the inevitable valley through which all, however illustrious the endowments or few and simple the attainments, must pass. His words were, in their substance, very much like those we have all heard in similar circumstances from departing believers. Dr. Gregory records some of them. When he was told of the probability of the coming change, in his first apprehensions that his work on earth was finished, he said: "But I am in God's hands, and I rejoice that I am. I am God's creature, at His disposal for life or death, and that is a great mercy!" And again, he said: "I have not one anxious thought either for life or death. What I dread most are dark days; but I have had none yet, and I hope I shall not have any." Again, he said: "I fear pain more than death. If I could die

easily, I think I would rather go than stay, for I have seen enough of the world, and I have a humble hope." A friend said to him: "This God will be our God;" and he quickly replied: "Yes, He will; 'He will be our Guide even unto death!'" When the shadows of the great probability became imminent, his physicians wished to call in, to aid their consultations, the eminent Dr. Pritchard, so well known to us as the distinguished father of ethnological science; and as Dr. Pritchard entered the room, Mr. Hall was able to rise, and to receive him with that urbane dignity which so remarkably distinguished him; but their consultation appears to have only resulted in the confirmation of the anticipated fatal sentence. After death it was Dr. Pritchard who conducted the *post-mortem* examination, and one almost shudders as one reads his words. Many parts of the system appear to have been painfully deranged; but he says: "The kidney on the right side was *entirely filled* by a large, rough, pointed calculus." He points out other sources of pain, especially in the vertebræ, and thus gives some account for that constant pressure of the hand upon the back, one of the most marked characteristics of Mr. Hall when preaching. And Dr. Pritchard closes the painful letter in which he describes the results of his examination by saying: "Probably no man ever went through more physical suffering than Mr. Hall. He was a fine example of the triumph of the higher powers of mind, exalted by religion, over the infirmities of the body. His loss will long be felt in this place, not only by persons of his own

communion, but by all that have any esteem for what is truly great and good."

The entrance of Dr. Pritchard into the room where the sufferer was lying has compelled us a little to anticipate the close. The doctor's pathological description also naturally compels other reflections: what would this man have been, and what might he not have accomplished, had the tenement in which the mind resided only equalled in its strength and vigour the nobility of its inhabitant! We have heard of men who demand our sympathy because of the weight they carried in life, impeding the movement and effort of their will; how great was the weight which this great man sustained! Thinking of the trifles which sometimes irritate us, and lead to the bitterest accusations of Providence, we may well feel not less rebuke than surprise as we hear his patient spirit exclaiming, "I have not complained, have I, sir? and I won't complain!"

Sometimes, during the last hours, as the pains a little subsided, he was unable to forbear the natural habit of his mind to philosophise upon the sources and ultimate causes of pain; but these reflections were speedily broken by thoughts upon the sufferings of Christ, and the exquisite and horrible agony of crucifixion; and then came what seem to us to be very sweet words upon the mercies which were then alleviating his lot, conjoined to a review of the mercies of past years. "I have been," he said, "a great sufferer in my time, but it is generally true that the dispensations of God have been merciful to me;" and then he went on to remark upon

that great truth, which so many sufferers, through all ages, have realized, in monastic and convent cells ; in prisons, and in sick rooms ; on dying beds, and in disappointed lives : that the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ is the best antidote against impatience under any troubles we may experience ; and he recommended this medicine to his friend Mr. Chandler, who recites the conversation, as the best in pain or distress, or the expectation of death.

The death-bed of Robert Hall appears to have been all serious ; he felt the seriousness of the work in which he was engaged. So far as was consistent with the incessant pain, his spirit was serenely cheerful, but there appear to have been no sallies of wit, or play of fancy. To some men of eminent genius such lightnings have occasionally shone forth in dying hours, nor do we suppose that they can be regarded for a moment as inconsistent with elevated piety ; he permitted no thoughts to obtrude themselves upon him, to divert his attention from the greater consolations. It is to his friend Mr. Chandler, one of the tutors of the Bristol Baptist Academy, that we are indebted for all that we know of the last moments of Hall. His tender wife was constantly by his side, with all the assiduity of affection and hope. In one brief moment she told him she thought he was better and that he would recover. "Ah, my dear," he said, "we *may* hope for the best, but it is well to prepare for the worst ;"—and it was immediately after this that so severe a paroxysm returned that Mr. Chandler, who appears to have been a friend of the house-

hold as well as of Mr. Hall, was sent for, and he found him labouring with difficult breathing, sitting propped up on the sofa, his feet in hot water. As Mr. Chandler entered, Mrs. Hall said, noticing some peculiar fixedness in her husband's eyes: "This can't be dying!" and he said: "It is death! It is death! Oh, the sufferings of this body!" She bent over him and said: "But are you comfortable in your mind?" and he replied: "Oh, very comfortable, very comfortable!—only come, Lord Jesus, come!" Then he hesitated, as if unable to bring out the last word, when one of his daughters, almost involuntarily, uttered the word "*quickly*;" and it is said he turned upon her, and shed out from his face a look of the most exquisite delight. Contrary to most experiences, his consciousness appeared to quicken as his spirit was passing. The brain died last; one after another, the loving members of his household appear to have sunk in despair. The dissolution of the frame from its inhabitant appears to have been attended by every circumstance of severe pain, and when Mr. Chandler asked him if he still suffered much, he replied: "Dreadfully!" Stimulants were applied again and again, but if he accepted them, he said: "I am dying; death has come at last; it's all useless!" But through all, singular to say, his mind was quite erect, retaining entire mental vigour and composure; it is even characteristic that a few moments before death, he expressed to Mr. Chandler, with the courtly graciousness so natural to him, the fear lest he was wearying him and fatiguing him by the pressure

of his attention. It was near about this moment that the last attending member of his own family was compelled to leave the room by the presence of his pain. He followed with tender sympathising look; a shuddering convulsion came over him, and he was gone!

There goes a story which, while exceedingly pleasant, we have been unable to trace to its original record, that when, upon one occasion, William Wilberforce and Robert Hall met, in some conversation upon the unseen world Hall said to Wilberforce: "But what is your idea of heaven, sir?" and Wilberforce replied: "Love, Mr. Hall, *love!* What is yours, sir?" "My idea of heaven, sir!" said Mr. Hall; "my idea of heaven is rest, sir, *rest!*" At last the idea was realized and the rest attained.

We have already seen the report of the physician. Probably from the earliest childhood to that twenty-first of February, 1831, he had never known a day of entire freedom from pain; but the rest came at last, we may be sure, the beautiful "rest which remaineth for the people of God!" Nor is it impertinent, when by experience we are able to realize, amidst our inferior pains, the delicious enjoyment of the moment of their cessation, to think what must have been the exquisite sensation of such a spirit released, one moment suffering the most excruciating agony, and the next in the wonderful transition to entire and eternal satisfaction, a translation in all experiences sudden, from the land of death to the fulness of life, illumination, knowledge, purity, and rest!

In Dr. Trestrail's interesting reminiscences he mentions that, at the request of Mrs. Hall, two of the students of the Baptist College watched in the house while the corpse lay there ; she and her daughters had a staff of comfort and protection in the presence of these "sons of the prophets," like those of old, "standing afar off to view" the place from whence Elijah had ascended. "In company with my fellow-student, long since deceased, the Rev. Enoch Williams," says Dr. Trestrail, "I discharged this duty one night ; a night," he says, "never to be forgotten ! There is always a solemnity attendant on the midnight hours when watching—and especially in the presence of death. How distinctly the slightest sound is heard ; the ticking of a clock even will strongly impress us with a feeling of awe. While, now and then, looking on the inanimate form before us, it was striking to observe how all traces of suffering and pain had vanished. It was difficult to believe that he was not wrapped in profound sleep, so calm, so still, so majestic. A wonderful change of expression often comes over the countenance of those who die in the Lord—a sort of ethereal beauty never before observed, as if the opening prospect of eternal joy had left some indication of what the spirit felt ere it entered on its full enjoyment. But those eyes which had so often expressed the intense force of Mr. Hall's vast mental capacity, and those lips which had given utterance to strains of eloquence almost unsurpassed, were now closed in death. There was only the mortal body—'the great inhabitant was gone.'"



Of course his death was felt by all as a great loss, and beyond the circle of his own denomination, and even the highest organs in the country, such as *The Quarterly Review*, *The Monthly Review*, and *The British Critic*, high as was the tone of churchmanship in some, hastened to pay a tardy honour to his illustrious memory; and High Churchmen, like Henry Melville, even from their pulpits, shed round the name of the departed orator the tenderness of their grateful recollections; while from his own and kindred communions several masterly orations, such as those of his successor at Leicester, Mr. Mursell, Mr. Newton Bosworth, Dr. Francis Cox of Hackney, Joseph Hughes of Battersea, and many others, offered their words as beautiful, suitable, and finely discriminative *Immortelles* upon his coffin. He was buried in the small chapel-ground of the Broadmead Meeting-house, of which he was the pastor; of course amidst marks of the deepest mourning, and of the highest honour which could be offered by his fellow-worshippers, and those of other communions. From thence his remains were, some years afterwards, removed by his son-in-law, the late Mr. Warren of Bristol, to the beautiful cemetery of Arno's Vale; and an accurate medallion likeness attempts to realize his features on the tomb. It is, however, most remarkable, considering the matchless fame and eminence of this most distinguished man, whose name that celebrated critic, Lord Brougham, unites with those of Bossuet, Massillon, and the overwhelming orators of the French school, whilst others have spoken of him as the most consummate

orator of all the Christian ages, and whilst great statesmen, like Pitt and Mackintosh, have coupled the tremendous grandeur of his higher flights with the name of Demosthenes, that there is, to the present day, although the stately monument of Chalmers adorns one of the squares of Edinburgh, no national monument nor any adequate literary memorial to perpetuate the memory of the humble, but eminently holy and gifted genius of ROBERT HALL.

It is to the honour, however, of his admirable and now venerable successor, Mr. Mursell of Leicester, that, some years since, he succeeded in raising funds for the erection of a statue which was unveiled in the presence of a multitude of friends, and by them and other subscribers publicly presented to the Corporation of Leicester.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *SOME PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.*

REVIEWING the pages we have so far written, we are only reminded how much remains unsaid. The information we have concerning this really almost perfect man is slight and sketchy, scattered over a number of volumes, and from the memoirs of men who had some personal intercourse with him; he left no journal, and his letters are few. His modest appreciation of himself is very extraordinary, he really appears to have thought that nothing he did or said was worthy of a record. No adequate life of him has ever been written. It is not probable, nay, scarcely possible now, that one ever will be; perhaps his friends did their best. But before we lay down our pen, we must select and gather up a few of those personal characteristics which may more distinctly individualize him.

As a conversationalist, as what we mean by a "table-talker," Mr. Hall seems to us the most brilliant of whom we have any knowledge. He had the information, and what we may call the pronounced and dogmatic manner of Johnson, without his rudeness, and with more wit; he had the sharp scintillating sparkle of Sidney

Smith, without his flippancy and really frequent intolerable nonsense. One cannot but think how he would have charmed at Holland House, and, if she could have forgotten that he was a Baptist minister, how Lady Holland, who really loved to find her master,—and very rarely did,—would have petted him. John Foster used to say of the two men, that in conversation the words of Hall were imperial, and moved like the words of an emperor; of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, that his words moved like those of a necromancer. Somehow this last strikes one as a doubtful compliment, and leads us to infer the probability that they put you to sleep. Certainly Hall had the profusion and spontaneousness of Coleridge without his tedious prolixity and unfairness; Coleridge did not converse,—apparently he monologuized. Dispassionately, and with no disposition to exaggerate, we would inquire, if Hall were not the most brilliant table-talker of whom we have any knowledge, who then is? He appears to have been equal to all company, and to have shone with about equal brilliancy whether talking to ponderous Parrs,—hardly able to enunciate the nodosities of their scholarship,—or with lumpish peasants by the cottage, or the farm-house fireside. Among the subjects for regret in literature,—and there are many,—we know of nothing more regretful than that Hall had not more competent memorists by his side to preserve for us the flashes of his wit and intelligence; spontaneous, grand, and gushing, sometimes, even in their sublimity, making us smile by their grotesqueness. We read, during his Bristol days, of

his joining a party on a visit to Lord Clifford's Park, at King's Weston. They reached Penpole Point about seven o'clock in the evening. It was about the latter end of May, and a magnificent evening; the sun was setting, and the waters of the Severn were in all their magnificence and glory. Mr. Hall burst into raptures. "Only look, sir," he exclaimed, "on that mild silvery light, shed upon the expanse of the waters; why, sir, it looks as if they were preparing for a magnificent public baptism, and the hundred and forty and four thousand described in the Revelation, were about to descend into the waves!" It gives one a pleasant idea of Mr. Hall's freedom, to know that he and his party stayed at the Inn at King's Weston till eleven o'clock, and then returned to Bristol.

Rapidly also, in conversation, he hit off the character of a great writer, or a popular book, in a sharp concise criticism. Speaking of Barrow's sermons, the style of which is extremely rugged, Mr. Hall observed: "I have read them, sir, and am exceedingly pleased with them; Barrow was a great man. His style is verbose, but matter excellent." Blair's sermons were then mentioned. "Blair is not to be compared with Barrow, sir. It is true that his periods are rounder, and, as compositions, his discourses are more elegant: they resemble heaps of polished pebbles, sir. Barrow is, however, the closest thinker; his ideas are profound: they are diamonds stuck in mud, sir." It was apparently in the course of the same conversation, that some popular work, an essay by a friend whose writings Mr. Hall had

formerly eulogised, was introduced. He said : " It was with difficulty that I read the book, sir ; the writer appears to me to have set out on a race after obscurity, and to have overtaken it."

We have already said we have no adequate portrait of Hall in domestic life,—Hall as a table-talker. Dr. Gregory supplies us, in his biography, with suggestive cameo hints and relieving lights, but they are little more. Such an anecdote as the following, as showing how little we know of Hall, is almost provoking. The doctor tells us that, shortly after his removal to the military college of Woolwich, in his capacity of professor of mathematics, he invited his valued friend, the eminent Dr. Hutton, to dine with Mr. Hall at his house. Mr. Hall, for the purpose of drawing Dr. Hutton into conversation, asked him a few questions, suggested by some of Barrow's "*Disquisitiones*," in reference to mathematical measure, and its application to force, momentum, etc. They essentially involved the metaphysics of the subjects of inquiry. He also expatiated upon the imaginative as well as the rational process involved in the genesis of curves by motion as taught by Barrow and Newton. The next day Dr. Hutton said to Dr. Gregory : " What an extraordinary man that friend of yours is ! why he was born to be a mathematician. If you could only persuade him to give himself up to the science, he would teach us all something." Dr. Gregory confesses his indebtedness to him for the aid he derived in their united mathematical reading ; and from him he learned the habit of tracing apparent

results to their foundations, and to value such studies for their intellectual discipline as well as for their practical benefit.

Robert Hall, like Johnson, is an illustration that brilliant talkers are frequently in danger of indulging in pungency which is often sharp and piercing, perhaps, sometimes, even unjust. William Jay says that "nothing could be more crushing than the occasional wit of his remarks. One evening, in a rather crowded place, I was sitting by him. A minister was preaching very finely and flourishingly, but to little purpose, from 'the white horse,' and 'the red horse,' and 'the black horse,' and 'the pale horse' of the Revelation. He sat very impatiently, and as the sermon closed, he pushed rather rudely towards the door, saying, 'Let me out of this horse-fair.'" He was not often unkind; but Jay mentions being with him, on another occasion, in the library of the Baptist Academy. One of the students appears to have been speaking to him of his experience and lamenting the hardness of his heart. Hall turned to him and said: "Well, thy *head* is soft enough!" Jay thinks the young man must have felt it severely, and has no doubt that Mr. Hall's reflections smote him afterwards for his apparent harshness. This will remind our readers of the well-known anecdote of the young man who desired to enter the ministry, and came to Mr. Hall for his advice. Mr. Hall naturally asked him why he entertained such a desire. The young man said: "You know, sir, I must not hide my talents in a napkin!" "Then," said Mr. Hall, "put them in a pocket-

handkerchief, sir,—that will be large enough!” Dr. Leifchild says he could be blunt, almost insulting. A Baptist minister from Wales was listening to Mr. Hall’s vivid description of the extraordinary power, appearance, and preaching of Christmas Evans. “But, Mr. Hall,” said the minister, “you remember that he had but one eye.” “*One* eye,” exclaimed Mr. Hall, “why, sir, if I had a thousand eyes such as yours, I’d give them all for *that* one!” It was, perhaps, upon another occasion that, when some one remarked that Christmas Evans had but one eye, he said: “Aye, sir, but that was a piercer! Why, sir, it was an eye to light an army through a wilderness on a dark night!”

But, very often, it was in the course of conversation that he gave utterance to some of his happiest and most characteristic words. That was fine, when some one spoke to him of some lady of his acquaintance. “Sir,” said he, “she has the manners of a court, and the piety of a convent!” And his estimate of Mrs. Hannah More is very well known. When he was asked if her manners were striking, he replied: “Nothing *striking*, certainly not; her manners are too perfectly proper to be striking. Striking manners are *bad* manners, you know; she is a perfect lady, and studiously avoids those peculiarities and eccentricities which constitute striking manners.” He had a great admiration for Dr. Chalmers; but when he was forced into a critical estimate, every one must have felt, that was a happy summing up of the doctor’s pulpit style: “His mind seems to move on hinges, not on wheels; there is in-



cessant motion, but no progress." He must have astonished Christmas Evans when the noble Welshman was expatiating to him on the copiousness and expressiveness of the Welsh language, but wound up by saying "How I wish, Mr. Hall, that Dr. Gill's works had been written in Welsh!" "I wish they had, sir; I wish they had, with all my heart, sir, for then I should never have read them! They are a continent of mud, sir!"

"What do you think," said some one to him, "of Tom Paine's attack upon the Bible?" "I think it is as ineffably weak and ridiculous," said Mr. Hall, "as would be the attempt of a mouse to nibble at the wing of an archangel!" His description of the well-known church dignitary who wrote those flippant papers in the *Edinburgh Review* on "Methodism and Missions," and even satirized the good and great Dr. Carey,—Hall's predecessor at Leicester,—as "Jeremiah Ringletub," has been thought by some persons somewhat severe; but let the occasion be remembered on which Mr. Hall, in speaking of him, said, that "he had the levity of a buffoon joined to a heart of iron, and a face of brass!" His remark upon the Archbishop of Canterbury was pungent! Mr. Hall had spoken of the mark of respect paid by the archbishop to his chaplain, that he dined at the same table; but the clergyman to whom he was speaking, said: "You are under a mistake, Mr. Hall; the chaplain did not dine at the same table, but was called in twice to say grace." Hall burst forth in terms of astonishment,—“Sir,” said he, “that is being great; his grace not choosing to present his own

request to the King of kings, calls in a deputy to take up his messages! A great man indeed, sir,—a very great man!” And this reminds us of his caustic criticism, after reading the life of Bishop Watson, that it had lowered his estimate of the bishop’s character. “Poor man,” he said, “I pity him! He married public virtue in his early days, and seemed, for ever after, to be quarrelling with his wife!”

We seldom find ourselves venturing to dissent from his verdicts even in the most nimble and rapid brilliancy of conversation; but sometimes, as with the great old Samuel, we are compelled to hesitate. Mr. Morris remarks how, frequently, when in his company, pretentious strangers would irritate him by supposing that something metaphysical and fine must be dragged into the conversation. On such occasions Mr. Hall was often either pointedly silent, or pointedly sarcastic. Upon one occasion a strange minister, after several unsuccessful attempts, succeeded in rousing Mr. Hall by inquiring “whether in a future state the powers of the human mind would not expand and be enlarged to an indefinite degree?” He started, and called out: “What is that, sir? What is that, sir?” The question was carefully worded and deliberately repeated. Mr. Hall quickly replied: “Why so, sir? Why so? Why suppose the human mind indefinitely enlarged more than the human body? and if the *body* is to undergo this frightful increase, then we should have a man whose nose would perforate the sun, his chin stretching across the Atlantic, and battles fought in the wrinkles of his

face; he must be a fool, sir, who can believe that!" This is one of the very few instances in which the nimbleness of the fancy outstripped the judgment; but it is probable that it was only a mode of snubbing pedantic affectation.

In conversation he appears always to have been equal to current literature; but of books, we apprehend that

"His days among the dead were passed,"

especially among his old favourites, the Greeks. We think it is Dr. Gregory who says that he was perfectly familiar with every scrap that has come down to us of old Grecian lore. We were glad to find him so hearty a lover of our own great favourite, Tucker's "*Light of Nature*," of which he spoke as a work in which the noblest philosophy was brought down by a master hand and placed within the reach of every man of sound understanding." He could not be brought to read Byron. He admitted his greatness, but said: "I do not know sir, why we should take pleasure in minutely investigating deformity." The comparison of Pollok with Milton appears to have irritated him. "Pollok," said he, "is no more to be compared with Milton than a clown with a prince!" For Young, on the other hand, he had great admiration. We have been surprised that his review of the poet Crabbe has never, in any instance, been reprinted; and we believe that few as his reviews were, and much as he hated reviewing, there were several others which have not been included amongst his works.

We turn to other characteristics. Lord Lytton refers, in language we have already quoted, to Robert Hall's act of solemn dedication of himself to God: "and it is impossible," he says, "not to be thrilled, while reading it, with an admiration that elevates while it awes you; any review life of Mr. Hall would be incomplete which did not give it."

"O LORD, Thou that searchest the heart, and triest the reins of the children of men, be Thou the witness of what I am now about, in the strength of Thy grace, to attempt; that grace I humbly and earnestly implore, to give validity and effect to that solemn engagement of myself to Thy service on which I am about to enter. Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are none of them hid from Thee; 'I was born in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me'; I am an apostate, guilty branch of an apostate, guilty root, and my life has been a series of rebellions and transgressions, in which I have walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. How shall I confess my transgressions before Thee! what numbers can reach, what words can adequately express them! 'My iniquities have increased over my head, and my transgressions have reached up to heaven.' O Lord, I esteem it a wonderful mercy that I have not been long since cut off in the midst of my sins, and been sent to hell before I had an opportunity or a heart to repent. Being assured from the word of God of Thy gracious and merciful nature, and of Thy willing-

ness to accept penitent believing sinners on the ground of the blood and righteousness of Thine adorable Son, who died, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God, and that he that cometh to Him He will in no wise cast out, I do most humbly prostrate myself at the footstool of His cross, and, through Him, enter into Thy covenant. I disclaim all right to myself from henceforth, to my soul, my body, my time, my health, my reputation, my talents, or anything that belongs to me. I confess myself to be the property of the glorious Redeemer, as one whom I humbly hope He has redeemed by His blood, to be part of 'the first-fruits of His creatures.' I do most cheerfully and cordially receive Him in all His offices,—as my Priest, my Prophet, and my King. I dedicate myself to Him, to serve, love, and trust in Him as my life, and my salvation, to my life's end. I renounce the devil and all his works, the flesh and the world, with heartfelt regret that I should have been enslaved by them so long; I do solemnly and deliberately take Thee to be my full and satisfying good, and eternal portion, in and through Thine adorable Son, the Redeemer, and by the assistance of the blessed Spirit of all grace, the third Person in the Triune God, whom I take to be my Sanctifier and Comforter to the end of time, and through a happy eternity, praying that the Holy Spirit may deign to take perpetual possession of my heart, and fix His abode there. I do most solemnly devote and give up myself to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, agreeably to the terms of the gospel covenant, and in humble expectation

of the blessings it ascertains to sincere believers. I call Thee to witness, O God ! the truth and reality of this surrender of all I have, and all I am, to Thee ; and, conscious of the unspeakable deceitfulness of my heart, I humbly and earnestly implore the influence of Thy Spirit to enable me to stand steadfast in this covenant, as well as an interest in the blood of the Son, that I may be forgiven in those instances—alas, that such an idea should be possible !—in which I may in any degree swerve from it. Done this 2nd day of May, 1809, seven o'clock in the evening : Leicester.

“ROBERT HALL.”

Of course it is scarcely necessary to observe that this most wonderful glimpse into Mr. Hall's deep interior life only became known when found by Dr. Gregory amongst his papers after his death.

Mr. Hall's friends regarded that as an almost foolish conviction in his mind that he was never really converted until after he entered upon his pastorate at Leicester ; but the reason for this notion is not far to seek : there can be no doubt that the memory of his great and calamitous illness did really produce in his mind a new frame of intense seriousness ; he was indeed, what Dr. Parr called him, “a saint.” The nurse who was in the house on the occasion of the birth of his first child, said to some people outside : “Why, the good man does nothing but pray ! We have been praying ever since I have been here ; he gets up at five in the morning, and may be heard praying in his study ;—he calls his

family to prayer three times a day, and, in the evening, talks to them separately on the necessity and importance of religion." His affliction greatly subdued him. He writes to a friend: "I hope I am more anxious to see my heavy affliction sanctified than removed: whether it would be best for it to be removed may well be doubted; of the admirable benefit arising from sanctification, both in time and eternity, there can be no doubt. I presume the Lord sees that I require more hammering and hewing than almost any other stone that was ever elected for a spiritual building, and that is the secret reason of His dealings with me. Let me be broken into a thousand pieces if I may but be made up again and formed by His hand for purposes of His mercy. I see more and more of the unspeakable blessedness of being made like God, and of becoming a partaker of His holiness; I *see* it, I say, but I do not attain, or at least in so unspeakably small a degree that I have every moment reason to be abased and to repent in dust and ashes."

Perhaps it belongs to this department of his character to notice how fond he always was of intercourse with the poor. He was glad also to distribute the alms of his Church himself; and it was his pleasure, in addition to this, to go about amongst his poor and inferior friends for a cup of tea, generally taking with him, in such cases, the tea done up in paper. He was, like Johnson, a mighty tea drinker; and when he found the fire unkindled, he would kindle it, set the kettle boiling, and make himself at home with his humble friends in their

humble home. These instances are mentioned by Mr. Morris as quite usual in his life. Altogether, our readers will indeed think, an astonishing man, and worthy, as we have said, of the last item of Parr's affluent eulogium; but not often have we found this singular, "saintly piety" united to such peculiar attributes of genius.

His ways were odd altogether. He was fond of night walking, and enjoyed, especially, the charm of a very retired walk amidst a dense population. Night walks in churchyards had almost a morbid fascination for him; we suppose he almost always lived in the hope of encountering some supernatural appearance. Our readers may be pleased to smile, but our business is to delineate Mr. Hall; he appears to have had a strong faith in the possibility of apparitions, and was intensely imbued with Milton's grand sentiment that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth

Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep."

He thought no preternatural appearance would give him any alarm whatever, and he saw no reason for apprehension.

The character of Mr. Hall will bear a close, and even prejudiced, survey; his piety was elevated in its purity and consistency. He was, it has been remarked, frequently, in debate, overwhelming and overbearing, but when, as was sometimes the case, he lost his temper, he was readily humbled, and often acknowledged himself to blame. Upon one occasion, when a discussion had been unusually warm, he suddenly closed



the debate, retired to a remote corner of the room, and was overheard by a lady, who was just entering, to ejaculate with deep feeling, "Lamb of God! Lamb of God! calm my perturbed spirit." His transitions from intercourse with men to intercourse with Heaven were sometimes singularly rapid. A friend mentions being with him on some pleasant evening occasion when a happy circle had been enjoying a sparkling evening, and Mr. Hall had yielded cheerfully to the jocular and merriment, and, just as he had told some humorous story, the clock struck twelve; in an instant he laid down his pipe, exclaiming, as if almost alarmed, "Sir, it is midnight, and we have not had family prayer yet!" In a moment or two they were on their knees, and he was pouring out his pathetic petitions.

He had an overflowing nature, and he very often regretted that he was carried away into a region of merry talk in the course of conversation. An eminent London minister, quite remarkable for the odd stuff he sometimes poured forth from the pulpit, gravely shook his head, and reproved Mr. Hall for what he called "the nonsense" he introduced into his talk. "The difference between us, sir," said Mr. Hall, "is that I reserve all my nonsense for the parlour; you have little in the parlour because you reserve all yours for the pulpit!" Still he often regretted when conversation in which he indulged did not take a more elevated and useful strain.

We have heard, as, perhaps, few have heard, the story of Mr. Hall's marriage, and it has always added something to our sense of the innate manliness, and, at

the same time, the dignified courtliness of his character. It is many years ago since we first heard the story from an old Baptist minister, who was, for a long course of years, a pastor in Leicester, but who has some time since, entered into his rest; and now that all the parties whom it immediately concerned have passed away, we see no reason why the story should not be told as it was told to us. Mr. Morris touches the matter very delicately in his *Recollections*, but he evidently felt the restraint due to the fact that Mrs. Hall was yet living. We rather think, but of this we cannot be quite certain, that the lady chiefly concerned was a member of his Church. We have seen that, before Mr. Hall became the pastor at Leicester, and when he left Dr. Cox's retreat, marriage was absolutely enjoined upon him as the essential condition for breaking up the habit of solitude, which had, no doubt, materially contributed to his calamity. Of course the married ladies of Mr. Hall's acquaintance were exceedingly interested, and, in a very natural manner, his fine affectionate nature led them as affectionately to wish that their distinguished friend should find a wife who would ensure and add to his personal happiness. He was at this time in middle life, and in the very height and fulness of his great fame. And surely, it might naturally be supposed, that as he was not a rich man, he would seek a lady of some social position and fortune, and such persons were commended to him. Whether it were at this period exactly, we do not know, but of some such person, a gentleman said to him: "And so, Mr. Hall, they say that you are about to

marry Miss ——!" Hall started back, exclaiming, "Marry Miss ——, sir! marry Miss ——! I should as soon think of marrying the devil's daughter, and going home and living with the old folks!"

With all the boldness and courageous intrepidity of his character, there was not only, as we have seen, a great innate modesty, but we can well believe that the sense of the calamity to which he had twice succumbed made him timid in any advances; it is an affection from which a woman, very naturally, shrinks back with some fear in a marriage connection; he possibly also felt some hesitation, from his previous experience, in trusting himself to the caprices of a woman of fortune. When the knowledge of his intended marriage became certain, it must have startled the good people of the various little Bethels scattered about the neighbourhood. It came about, as we have been told, in this way. Mr. Hall called one afternoon at the house of a married lady, one of his intimate friends, and, after the usual pleasant interchange of greetings, he said:

"And now, my dear madam, I want to take you into a secret; I hope I am going to be married!"

"Oh, my dear Mr. Hall, I am so glad; we shall all of us be so glad! And who is the lady?"

"Well," said Mr. Hall, "I know her, and you know her very well, but I am not accepted yet, and, in fact, I have not spoken to her."

The lady smiled, and thought there could be no doubt as to what the issue would be when the proposal was made. "But who *is* the lady?"

"Well, now," said Mr. Hall, "that is the reason why I have come to speak to you first; it is your maid, madam!"

"What, Mary?"

Well, the lady did not seem particularly startled, for Mary appears to have been one of those women, now, alas! too few, and becoming smaller in number year by year, who, in their humble sphere, adorn a household.

"I have felt it due to you, madam," said Mr. Hall, "to call this afternoon to ask your permission to speak to her in your house."

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Hall," said the lady, "if you have made up your mind;" and she proceeded to speak with a great deal of approbation and affection of her humble friend, and continued:

"I will leave the room and send Mary to you directly, Mr. Hall."

"By no means, madam, by no means," said the courteous and high-minded gentleman, "it is my duty to go to Mary, and if I have your permission, I shall go at once into the kitchen to see her."

And so Mr. Hall went. We don't know how our old friend became possessed of the particulars of so tender a conversation, but he told us, as seems very natural, that, sitting down in the kitchen, Mr. Hall said:

"Well, Mary, you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" Mary believed that she did; and then some other similar words, and then the tender question:

"And, Mary, do you think you can love *me*?"

All the rest must be left to the reader's imagination, or his familiarity with such scenes and circumstances, but this we believe to be the story of Mr. Hall's courtship. His intended bride removed from the household of which she had been a member, and was received into the family of Mr. Joseph Minns of Kettering. Mrs. Minns was a pious and accomplished lady ; she naturally took an affectionate interest in her visitor, and assisted in the acquirement of those duties and of that self-possession necessary for the distinguished sphere in which Mrs. Hall was to move, and which, every testimony records, she so honourably and beautifully filled to the close of her husband's career. It may not be uninteresting to add, from the testimony of Dr. Trestrail, who knew Mrs. Hall well, that, at this time, she must have been a remarkably beautiful girl.

Looked at from our point of view, the stream of Mr. Hall's life would seem to be marked only by the equanimity of its waves, the orderly procession of its outward course ; but it was not altogether so. There were a good many ruffling circumstances on which we cannot dwell at any length. In the "Life and Correspondence of Henry Crabbe Robinson," there are letters, which our space will not permit us to reprint, between himself and Mr. Hall. Mr. Robinson had thought it necessary to remonstrate with Mr. Hall upon some remarks he had made as to the danger of Mr. Robinson's society and opinions, and Hall replied in a letter of which Robinson says, "The reply is as well written as mine was ill written." They met not long

afterwards at Haverfordwest. Mr. Robinson says: "I fell in with Robert Hall. He received me with apparent pleasure, and was kind without being flattering. His countenance indicated a powerful intellect and strong sensibility. In disputation he expressed himself with characteristic point, and sometimes with virulence. The only allusion he made to our correspondence was by saying of one who thought himself ill-treated, 'he ought at once to have come forward, and in a manly way, as you did, to have made his complaint.' "

A more prominent instance of irritation to which he was subjected was that which made some sensation at the time, when he was rudely assailed by one Benjamin Flower. The story is too involved and long for these pages. The name of Mr. Hall appears to have been dragged into court; and, perhaps the only circumstance which now makes the instance memorable is, that Sir James Mackintosh stepped forward to scathe and scourge his assailant, and to throw round his friend the eloquence and energetic earnestness of his affectionate invective, remarking that "the black and fell malignity which pervades this man's attack on Mr. Hall raises it to a sort of diabolical importance, of which its folly, and ignorance, and vulgarity, cannot entirely deprive it. This must be my excuse for stooping so low as to examine it." And we only notice it here as an illustration that the brotherhood of the old Aberdeen days was not forgotten, but proved itself by deeds as well as words when the occasion seemed to call.

There are other instances which remind us of the

ruffled waves of a fairly serene life. William Hone is, by the multitude, almost forgotten now ; by the curious and prying lovers of English literature his name will never be forgotten. In spite of his triumph over Lord Ellenborough, and the magnanimity of his personal self-defence upon his trial, circumstances made his reputation certainly not enviable, and, not unnaturally, Mr. Hall made remarks upon his conduct for which Hone demanded an explanation. In any antagonism of this kind, it is noticeable that Mr. Hall's character comes out in a full, fine manliness. He was no diplomatist to play at the *double-entendre* of words ; but we had better let Mr. Greene tell the story of his interview with Hone.

“Being desirous to learn from Mr. Hall the particulars of the interview between the celebrated Mr. Hone and himself, I mentioned to Mr. Hall that I had been informed that Mr. Hone had called upon him at Watford, for an explanation and apology, and that he complied with the request. ‘Well, sir, what of that? Who told you? What have you heard?’ I replied: ‘It has been stated that Mr. Hone considered that his reputation was injured, by being coupled with Carlile, in the Reply to the Strictures in the *Christian Guardian*, where he is charged with blasphemy. He denied the charge, and begged to be informed on what work, or passage in his writings, the charge was founded. “There can be no mistake, sir,” said Mr. Hone, “for, in the next page, you define blasphemy, which you say is the speaking contumeliously of God: now, sir, where have I spoken contumeliously of God?”’ ‘Well, sir,’ said Mr. Hall,

'the account is mainly correct. I was wrong, and I certainly did apologise to Mr. Hone. There is nothing contrary to true dignity in that, sir. I once made you an apology, when you were a young man, sir, on discovering that I had been mistaken. To confess an error is an act of common justice between man and man. Now, sir, I will tell you the sequel. I said: "I am not acquainted, Mr. Hone, with your writings; but I am bound to believe you when you say that you have never made use of blasphemous language, and that you are a believer in Christianity; but by some means I have received the impression, in common with several other persons, that you cherished the same principles with Carlile. I hope, sir, as that is not the case, that you will take an early opportunity of making your belief known to the public. It will be the best method of doing away with the unfavourable impression." Mr. Hone left me perfectly satisfied. Sir,' he continued, 'it is false honour, and false dignity, when we refuse to apologise for an error. Men frequently subject themselves to the necessity of either telling a lie, or hazarding their own lives, or the life of a fellow-creature, merely to support an imaginary dignity.' " Mr. Hone, it is pleasant to say, as most of our readers know, died a Christian. He was received into the Christian fellowship by Thomas Binney—one well able to understand him, and to answer to his mental difficulties, and he died a member of the Church at the Weigh-House.

In 1818 it is interesting to notice that some serious difficulties appear to have occurred in connection with



Hall's pastorate. Our information is derived entirely from the succinct pages of Mr. Morris. It is somewhat humbling to find that the eminently wise, holy, and sanctified genius of this man could not pass altogether untroubled in pastoral relations, while it may be encouraging to humbler ministers who have had to suffer in the same fiery trials, to know that they are in the company of so distinguished a brother. "Perfectly unassuming," says Mr. Morris, "and not calculating on his own influence in society, he became distressed by the apprehension of a schism, and his inability to prevent it. He was alarmed at the ascendancy of one or two forward men not worthy to unloose his shoe-latchet, and was relieved by the declaration of a friend that the ardent attachment of the people, and their confidence in his discretion, would fully guarantee the measures he might see necessary to propose." But we only refer to this matter here in order that it may be seen that this man was not exempt from the actions of injustice and slander ; indeed, of the last, he suffered pretty much at various periods of his life—from newspaper assailants, from abusive antagonists, and even from co-religionists. Has not the wisest of all human pens said—

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,  
Thou shalt not escape calumny !"

We take leave of this eminent and honoured life with the feeling that very few are more worthy of a far closer and more exhaustive study than it has been in the power of these pages, or of this writer, to attempt. Hall is a

study. He was a Baptist minister, but he does not fit very nicely into the groove of any ecclesiastical sect. He had an objection to unions, and was altogether too magnanimously free to permit himself to be the mere mouthpiece of any human notions. In Protestantism he was unsound. He was so strong a Protestant that he was opposed to the claim of the papal hierarchy for political place and privilege ; this will astonish many who have not read his fine paper on Popery. Like John Milton, Andrew Marvell, and many other great Englishmen warmly attached to civil and religious liberty, he dreaded the power of Rome as inimical to both ; but he was hostile to priestism in every form, whether found in the gown of Calvin, the cassock of Horsley, or beneath the cope of the Papacy.

Our study table is yet strewn with anecdotes of his life, and illustrative estimates of his character and genius ; but we are compelled to part company from this great and imposing shade, with the sentiment that very few in these later days have approached nearer to human perfection than ROBERT HALL.









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